SCIENCE

THE VERY BEST OF

# ALIEN ENCOUNTERS

SCI-FI TALES FROM THE EIGHTIES!

ALIEN
ENCOUNTERS

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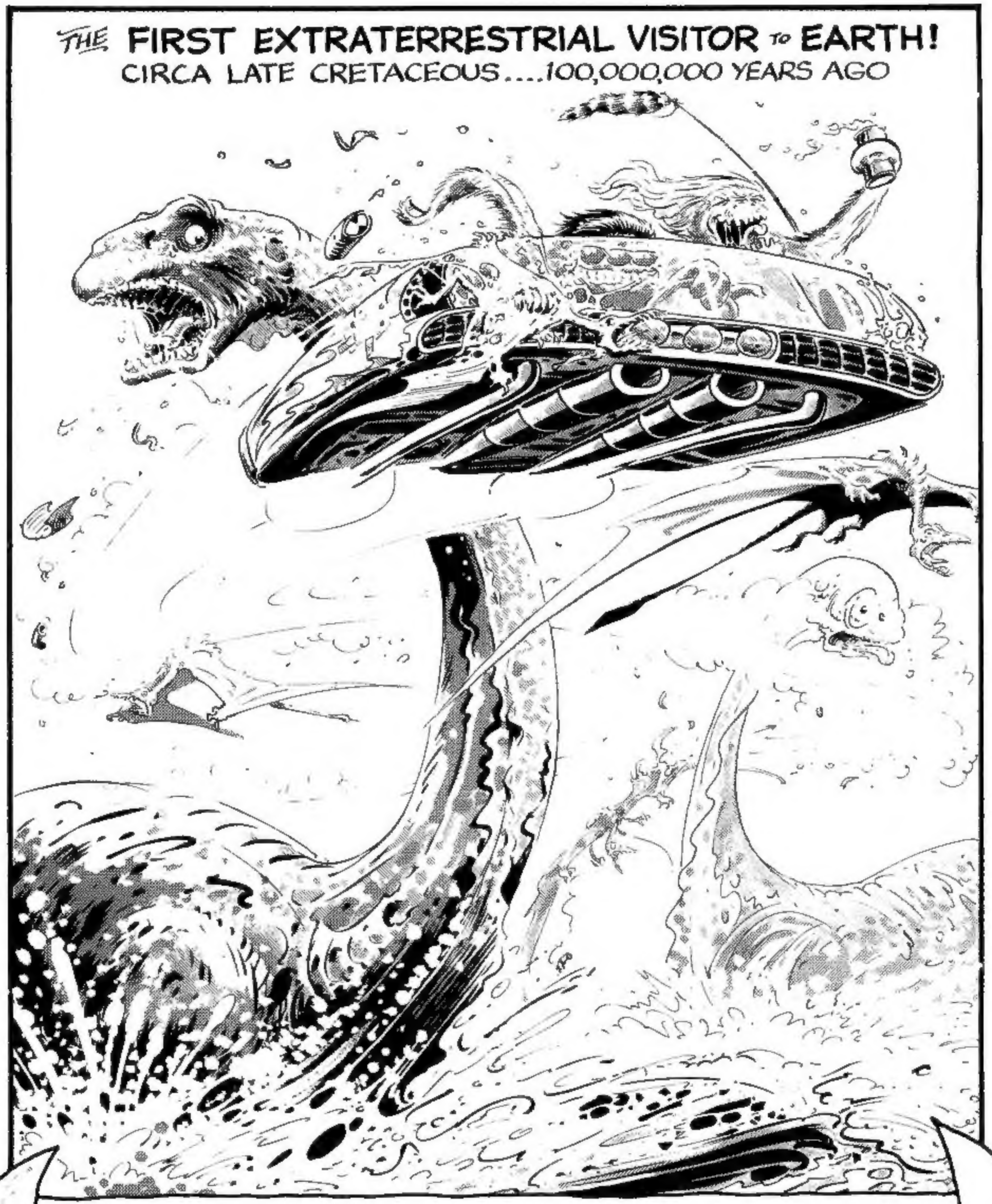


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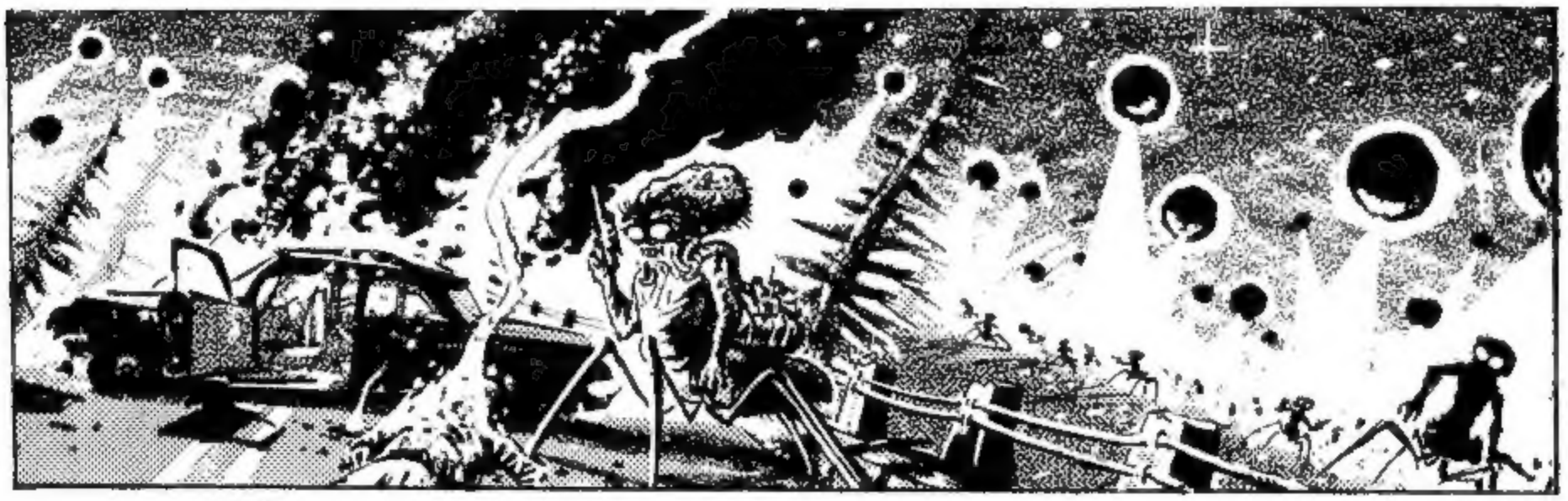


STRIKE FORCE!!

EARTH
GAME
OVER
INVASION
AW, DAD! JUST ONE MORE GAME?
GAME
OVER
GAME
OVER
GAME
OVER
PING!
EARTH INVASION
NOW, JUNIOR, I PROMISED MOM I'D HAVE YOU HOME FOR DINNER--
LET'S GO!!

# CHAIRMAN MAO AND THE MEN FROM MARS

STEVE STILES · DRAWN ENTIRELY BY HAND

I SUPPOSE YOU'VE ALL HEARD THE "BIG LIE" *FABRICATION* ERECTED AROUND MAO ZE-DONG'S SUPPOSED DEATH BY **NATURAL CAUSE.**

YOU **POOR DUPED VICTIMS OF FRAUD!** MAO ACTUALLY MET HIS ***UNIMAGINABLE*** END AT THE ALIEN HANDS OF UGLY **ROBOT MARTIANS** HIRED BY YOUR **DENTIST!**

UH-OH!

CHAIRMAN MAO! **CHAIRMAN MAO!**

WHY, IT'S **BUNKY!** HERE NOW, TAKE IT **EASY!**

PUFF PUFF

PUFF! Y-YOU GOTTA-PUFF- **SEE** THIS! GASP!

THERE! NOW HOW ABOUT **THAT!**

BWORK! ZUT!

A FLYING SAUCER!

WOW!

**LOOK!** A HATCH OPENS!

HMM...

!

IZZZZ

**UGH!** THEY'RE HORRIBLE! THEIR EYES ARE LIKE **HEADLAMPS!**

**TSK,** BUNKY! UNDER TRUE SOCIALISM, **ALL** BEINGS ARE **CLASSLESS!**

AH, BETTER LET ME DO THE TALKING HERE!

**YOU'RE IGNORANT!**

COMRADE MARTIAN...

**OH SHUT UP!**

BY THE WAY, JUST WHAT'S THE **POLITICS** UP THERE ON MARS?

ALLOW ME TO **DEMON-STRATE!**

EXCUSE ME!

HA!

**JESUS CHRIST!**

GRUNT! ***THERE!***

LATER, BACK ON THE FLYING SAUCER:

THAT MAKES SIXTEEN FOR **TODAY!**

ISN'T HE LOVELY?

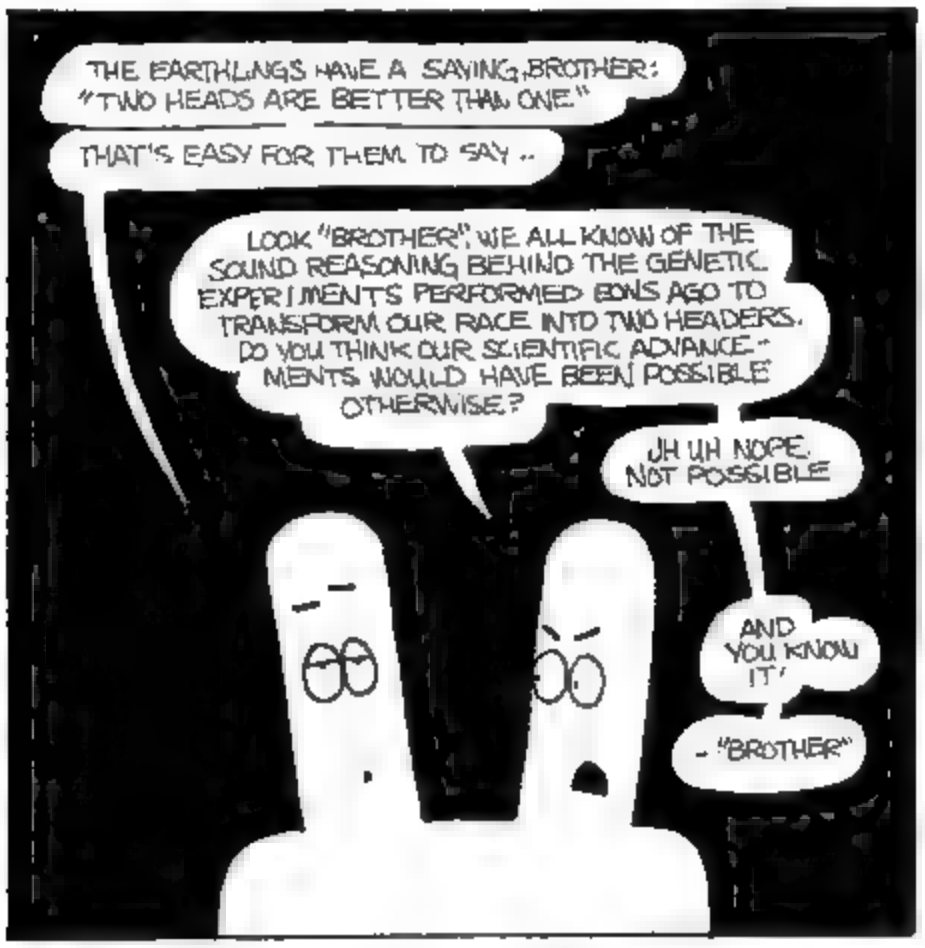
END

© Kitchen Sink 1977

# THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SPACE BUSINESS!!! BY FRED HEMBECK ©79

AT THE CONTROLS OF A SPACECRAFT SOMEWHERE IN THE DEEP RECESSES OF OUTER SPACE.
SO THE CHIEF HAS GIVEN US ANOTHER EARTH MISSION EH? GREAT! ONE OF FAVORITE SPOTS IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE!
WHAAAT?? ARE YOU CRAZY? WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT THOSE NEANDERTHALS' GOD FORSAKEN MUD BALL?

I ENVY THE HUMANS, BROTHER.
ENVY THEM?? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!
FOR ALL THEIR IMPERFECTIONS AT LEAST THEIR RACE ISN'T SADDLED WITH A TERMINAL CASE OF SCHIZOPHRENIA
HEY! IS THAT A KNOCK??


THE EARTHLINGS HAVE A SAYING, BROTHER: "TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE."
THAT'S EASY FOR THEM TO SAY..
LOOK "BROTHER", WE ALL KNOW OF THE SOUND REASONING BEHIND THE GENETIC EXPERIMENTS PERFORMED EONS AGO TO TRANSFORM OUR RACE INTO TWO HEADERS. DO YOU THINK OUR SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENTS WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE OTHERWISE?
UH UH NOPE. NOT POSSIBLE
AND YOU KNOW IT!
-"BROTHER"

SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT! BIG DEAL! THE EARTHLINGS MAY NOT BE ROAMING ALL OVER THE UNIVERSE, BUT I'M SURE THERE ISN'T ONE WHO HAS AS MUCH DIFFICULTY AS WE DO IN PROCURING FEMALE COMPANIONSHIP!
OH COME ON -- GIVE IT A REST ALREADY!!
EARTHLINGS DEAL WITH EACH OTHER ON A ONE TO ONE BASIS
BUT NOT US!
NOSIRREE NOT US!
"NOSIRREE"?

EVERY TIME I MEET A RESPECTABLE YOUNG LADY, I'M LUCKY IF I CAN MANAGE FIVE MINUTES OF INTELLIGENT CONVERSATION BEFORE YOUR REPULSIVE MANNER SCARES HER OFF!
WELL, HOW ABOUT ALL THE TIMES YOU'VE KEPT ME FROM HAVING MY FUN WITH FEMALES OF MY CHOOSING??
REALLY BROTHER, SOMEONE HAS TO LOOK AFTER OUR HEALTH. DREADED SPACE DISEASES THE LIKES OF WHICH THOSE HUSSIES CARRY WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO US IN PERFORMING OUR DUTY.
AW, WHY DON'T YOU JUST TAKE THE SITUATION INTO YOUR OWN HANDS?
WITH YOU WATCHING?
DON'T HOLD OUR BREATH

AND SPEAKING OF "DUTY" SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT OR NOT, I SOMETIMES WONDER WHAT THE PURPOSE OF THESE SCOUTING MISSIONS REALLY IS.
WELL, FOR ONE THING, I BELIEVE THE GRAND LEADER OWNS STOCK IN "THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER"...
WHAT?
THAT'S AN EARTH JOKE BROTHER. Y'SEE, ON EARTH PEOPLE REFER TO US AS "FLYING SAUCERS"

WHY? YOU AND I DON'T LOOK AT ALL LIKE A SAUCER, FLYING OR OTHERWISE

MUST YOU PARADE YOUR IGNORANCE OF EARTH ALL ABOUT? THE EARTHLINGS SEE OUR CRAFT--NOT US--AS FLYING SAUCERS.

OH

SO?

SO THEY HAVE MADE US INTO MEDIA SUPERSTARS, PRIMARILY BY COVERING OUR EXPLOITS IN JOURNALS FOUND MAINLY AT CENTERS OF NOURISHMENT.

TO A GREAT MANY EARTHLINGS, WE'VE BECOME A RELIGION!

NO!?!

OH YES!

AND ONE MAN EVEN BECAME WEALTHY BY CREATING ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE MASSES DEPICTING A VERSION OF OUR ARRIVAL-- LOOSELY BASED ON FACT!

REALLY?!? TO USE YOUR BELOVED EARTH SLANG, "THERE'S A SUCKER BORN EVERY MINUTE!"

..ONLY ONE HEAD FOR THE SPACE TRAVELERS, THOUGH

SO THE REASON FOR THESE INNUMERABLE EARTHLY JAUNTS IS SIMPLE. THE GRAND LEADER WANTS TO KEEP US IN THE PUBLIC EYE

BUT WHY? I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY!

MUST I SPELL IT OUT TO YOU? AH, I SEE THAT I MUST

DESPITE YOUR BELOVED "SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENTS", OUR RACE IS DYING. THE SUPPLY OF LIFE GIVING FRZZL IS QUICKLY WANING. EARTH HAS A SUPPLY MORE THAN LARGE ENOUGH FOR OUR PURPOSES.

ON EARTH FRZZL IS KNOWN AS GOLD, THEIR MOST PRECIOUS FORM OF WEALTH SINCE WE HAVE NEVER BEEN A WARLIKE RACE, THE GRAND LEADER HAS DECIDED THAT THE BEST WAY TO ACCUMULATE THIS WEALTH IS THROUGH SHOW BUSINESS!

"SHOW BUSINESS"?

AN EARTHLY FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT

IN THE PAST, AGENTS WERE SPLIT AND GENETICALLY RESTRUCTURED INTO EARTHLY ENTERTAINERS AGENTS ABBOTT, STIVEDY, AND ELVIES ALL VOLUNTEERED FOR THE PROCESS.

AND-- AND IS THAT WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO US?"

=GulpE

NO, I'M AFRAID NOT THE TIME FOR SUCH STOP-GAP MEASURES IS PAST NO, WE'RE GOING FOR BROKE THIS TIME. THE GRAND LEADER IS INTENT ON SELLING THE ENTIRE RACE--"DOUBLEHEADERS", AS THE EARTHLINGS WILL KNOW US. WE'LL BE THE BIGGEST ATTRACTION IN EARTH'S HISTORY-- BIGGER THAN DISCO, EVEN!!

SO WHY DON'T WE JUST LAND AND GO INTO OUR ACT ALREADY?

BY THE GRAND LEADER, YOU MAY STORE UNLIMITED SCIENTIFIC DATA IN YOUR CRANIUM, BUT YOUR COMMON SENSE IS ZILCH!

"ZILCH"?

THE GRAND LEADER, ABOVE ALL, HAS THE MIND OF AN ASTUTE BUSINESS PROMOTER.

IF WE HAD JUST FLOWN OFF TO EARTH AND LANDED, WE'D CERTAINLY HAVE DONE ALRIGHT. NOT SPECTACULAR MIND YOU BUT ALRIGHT.

ON THE OTHER TENTACLE, IF WE WERE TO TERSE THE EARTHLINGS SOMEWHAT--NOW YOU SEE US, NOW YOU DON'T-- THE PUBLICS' INTEREST IS BOUND TO BUILD TO HEIGHTS OF INTEREST UNHEARD OF, ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS PICK THE RIGHT TIME TO LAND AND REVEAL OURSELVES ONCE AND FOR ALL AND ZOWIE-- BOFFO BOX OFFICE LIKE YOU AIN'T NEVER SEEN!

NOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

I DON'T KNOW--IT SOUNDS CRAZY TO ME!

DON'T YOU SEE--THERE'S NOTHING THE EARTHLINGS LIKE MORE THAN TO USE THEIR WEALTH TO WALLOW IN EPHEMERAL ENTERTAINMENTS SO AS TO PUT THEIR DREARY EXISTENANCES TEMPORARILY OUT OF MIND

HUH??

LIKE YOU SAID, THERE'S A SUCKER BORN EVERY MINUTE

OH.

SO HOW LONG ARE WE GOING TO KEEP BUZZING THE EARTH?

I BELIEVE THE SCHEDULE CALLS FOR ELEVEN MORE EARTH YEARS OF SIMILAR BUT EVER INCREASING ACTIVITY

WHEW! THAT LONG?!? ARE WE EVER GOING TO LAND?

YES BROTHER, AND IT'S ALL PLANNED FOR MAXIMUM EFFECT

AFTER THE BUZZING PHASE IS COMPLETED, ONE SHIP--YET TO BE SELECTED-- WILL LAND IN THE CITY OF HACKENSACK AT A PRE-CHOSEN SPOT NEAR AN ESTABLISHMENT DEALING IN THE SALE OF HARDWARE. OUR CRAFT WILL SIT THERE FOR FORTY EIGHT EARTHLY HOURS WITH THE IMPERVIOUS FORCE SHIELD ON. AFTER SUFFICIENT ANTICIPATION HAS BEEN ELICITED FROM OUR EARTHLY AUDIENCE, OUR AGENT WILL LEAVE HIS SHIP AND MAKE HIS WAY INTO THE HARDWARE STORE

AND?

HE'LL WALK UP TO THE PROPRIETOR AND SPEAK HIS FIRST EARTHLY WORDS

WHICH WILL BE?

"TAKE ME TO YOUR LADDER!"

HUH? IS THAT MORE OF YOUR FAVORED EARTHLY HUMOR? THE GRAND LEADER'S PLAN IS TO CONQUER THE EARTH WITH JOKES??

ALWAYS LEAVE 'EM LAUGHING!

IM-PEACHMENT ANYONE?

AFTER THAT, AN AGENT WILL LAND AT AN EARTHLY BASEBALL GAME, AND REQUEST TICKETS FOR A DOUBLEHEADER.

SAY--IF WE SHARE THE SAME BODY, HOWCOME YOU'RE AWARE OF ALL THIS INFORMATION AND I'M NOT??

YOU INSISTED ON SNEAKING THOSE SHORT NAPS--I KNEW YOU'D REGRET IT SOMEDAY!

ENOUGH OF THIS SCHIZO DIALOGUE--WE'RE APPROACHING EARTH FAST! OH BOY!

"OH BOY"! HO HUM

C'MON BROTHER, TRY AND GET INTO IT! BUZZING THE EARTH CAN BE FUN"

GERONIMO!!

"GERONIMO"?

HA! IT NEVER FAILS TO AMAZE ME!
WHAT'S THAT?
HOW JUMPY THOSE EARTHLINGS TEND TO BE! THEY SHOULD RELAX AND ENJOY THE DAZZLING SHOW WE PUT ON FOR THEM.
VERY TRUE.

THEY SHOULD APPRECIATE THESE FREE ONE NIGHTERS. FOR ALL TOO SOON THIS LIMITED ENGAGEMENT WILL BE OVER.
AND THEN WE'LL... MAKE THE RUNWAYS RUN THROUGH THE NASAL ORIFICE TO SEE OUR ENTERTAINMENT!
AFTER ALL, THAT'S SHOW BIZ!
WOULDN'T ATOM BOMBING BE MORE ETHICAL?

LOOK BELOW!

YES, I SEE THEM, TOO...

COLD NIGHT! SURE MAKES THE FIRE FEEL GOOD!

IT'LL BE EVEN BETTER WHEN WE GET SUPPER COOKING OVER IT...

STAN! LOOK! A *PLANE!*

...FUNNY LOOKIN' PLANE...

YOU'RE *RIGHT!* IT'S *NOT* A PLANE!

WELL, WHAT THE HECK *IS* IT?

...I THINK WE'RE ABOUT TO *FIND OUT...*

I DON'T LIKE IT, JACK... WHERE'S THE *AXE?*

# FAST FOOD

STORY AND INKS - TIM BOXELL
PENCILS - Rich (ARSON)

HUNGRY AND IN A HURRY, *OORN* AND *LLORG* TURNED THEIR CRAFT TOWARD THE *THIRD PLANET* OF A CERTAIN MEDIUM-SIZED YELLOW STAR... THE ONLY PLACE WITHIN A FEW *LIGHT YEARS* WHERE THEY COULD PICK UP SOME...

*WHAT IN...?*

*RUN, JACK! RUN!!*

SWOOO

WELCOME ABOARD *CENRAD* FLIGHT 539! *LUNCH* WILL BE SERVED IN FIVE MINUTES! OUR *MENU* FOR TODAY FEATURES...

YOU!

...YOU'RE PUTTING ON A LITTLE *WEIGHT* THERE, OORN!

YOU TOO! IT MUST BE ALL THIS... *JUNK FOOD*! HAHAHAA!

WHERE TO FOR *SUPPER*?

HOW CAN YOU THINK OF FOOD? WE JUST ATE!

LET'S TRY *NORTHERN EUROPE*...

KEEP TO THE *HIGHLANDS*, THOUGH...

...THE MANUAL WARNS ABOUT THE *CORROSIVE* PROPERTIES OF *CITY AIR*!

I KNOW! BUT WE MUST START BACK *TOMORROW*, OR WE'LL RUN SHORT OF FUEL.

QUITE RIGHT. WE MUST *EAT* AND *RUN*. WHERE DO YOU SUGGEST?

EUROPE IT IS!

MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE OVER SWITZERLAND...
THESE MUST BE THE ALPS... SPOTTED ANYTHING YET?
THERE'S SOMETHING DOWN THERE!
YOODLE LOODLE LAYDEEEEEEEEEEAARRGGHH
SSSWWOOOO
NOT BAD, BUT I'M STILL HUNGRY.
SHALL WE LOOK FOR DESSERT BEFORE IT GETS DARK?
GOOD IDEA!
GERMANY'S NOT FAR...
FINE, BUT HURRY. THE LIGHT'S GOING FAST...
AND, SCANT SECONDS LATER...
WHAT LUCK!
JUST A LITTLE LONGER...
...AND IT WILL BE DARK...
...AND THEN...

AT THE SELFSAME MOMENT, IN THE TINY GERMAN VILLAGE OF *GROTZ*...

QUICKLY! HE *MUSN'T* ESCAPE!

THERE HE GOES!

WE'VE *GOT* HIM THIS TIME!

BRING THE *GUNS*!

VAS IS *GOINK ON* HERE, KLEINBECK?

IT'S *MENKVELDT*, INSPECTOR! WE'VE *FOUND* HIM AT LAST!

ZEHR GOOT! GO, THEN, KLEINBECK...HELP THEM PUT AN *END* TO THIS BUSINESS..

SARGENT! TAKE ME... HOME!

!

ZO TONIGHT THE *BLOOD* WILL FLOW *ONCE AGAIN*...

...ONLY *THIS* TIME, IT WILL BE *MENKVELDT'S*!

I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY... IT'S *CERTAIN*...

OOOF!

WHUUM

*UNNGH*...HURRY...

...THEY MEAN TO *KILL* ME!

CRUNCH

SHOOT HIM! WHY DOESN'T SOMEBODY *SHOOT HIM*?!

I'LL NEVER LOSE THEM *HERE*! THE *WHOLE TOWN* IS LOOKING FOR ME!

MY ONLY HOPE IS THE *COUNTRYSIDE*!

...I *MUST* REACH THE HILLS...

NO USE.. THEY'RE TOO CLOSE... I'LL NEVER MAKE IT...

GET HIM!

TAKE HIM *ALIVE!* HE MUST *PAY!*

ALL RIGHT! I'M *DONE* RUNNING! TAKE ME IF YOU *DARE!*

WE'VE GOT...

LOOK *BEHIND* HIM!

WHAT *IS* IT?!

GOTT IN HIMMEL!

SWOOO

IT'S THE *DEVIL'S* WORK! *FLEE!*

WELCOME ABOARD! YOU HAVE THE HONOR OF BEING THE *FINAL MEAL* THIS TRIP!

THE *MOON*...

I *FEEL* IT RISE...

WE'VE ENJOYED OUR VISIT TO YOUR LITTLE PLANET...

...AS A MATTER OF FACT, WE HOPE ONE DAY TO *RETURN*...

GRRRRR

NOW, NOW... DON'T *GRUMBLE*... NO ONE LIKES A *BITTER DESSERT*...

GRRWR

WHOSE TURN IS IT TO GO TO THE KITCHEN AND FETCH THE *GOODIES?*

GRRROOOWW

*I'D* BETTER GO! THIS SOUNDS LIKE IT MIGHT BE *TROUBLE!*

SSSSSS

RARRROOOOWWL

GAAAAHH

LLORG! SAVE SOME FOR *ME!*

IF HE'S HOGGING ALL THAT DESSERT FOR *HIMSELF*...

CRUNCH

CHOMP

SMACK

*ALL RIGHT* LLORG, YOU *PIG!*

WHERE ARE YOUR *MANNERS?*

SSSS

WHERE ARE *YOU?*

MUNCH

SNAP

SLURP

LLORG?

NO, *MENKVELDT.*

LATER...

IT DIDN'T TAKE MUCH TO FIGURE OUT HOW THIS THING *WORKS!*

SKZZNNK

CLICK

...AND I'VE GOT PLENTY OF MOONLIGHT...

...FOR A VISIT TO THE *VILLAGE!*

MINUTES LATER, OVER THE CHATEAU OF A CERTAIN *POLICE INSPECTOR*...

GOOD EVENING, SCHMEED...

*MEIN GOTT!*

...THIS IS *MENKVELDT* COME TO CALL!

*RUN,* INSPECTOR!

G-GET *AWAY!*

..RUN AS I HAVE FOR *YEARS!*

CRASH

DON'T *DARE* SLOW DOWN!

HURRY! *HURRY!*

SOMEBODY...HUH...HUH ...*HELP*...HUH...ME!

BECAUSE, YOU SEE,

...I'M GOING TO *EAT* YOU!

...AND I'M REALLY IN THE MOOD FOR SOME...

SSSSSSS

*FAST FOOD*...

NNNOOOOOOOO!!!

THE END

# SAUCER ATTACK

BEEP BEEP BEEP

thing '79

kehh..THIS PLACE LOOKS GOOD..LAND THE SHIP.!!*

*TRANSLATED FOR YOUR READING CONVENIENCE!

LET'S GIT THIS SHOW ON TH' ROAD. I WANNA' BE BACK IN TIME FOR 'ROARKING FOR DOLLARS'! SET UP THE ATMOS-GUNS.. AFTER WE FILL TH' AIR WITH ZYTRON III TH' NATIVES'LL GIVE US THIS PLACE!. HAR HAR HARRK..

CAP'N, WE'VE BEEN SPOTTED BY A NATIVE VESSEL!!

BLAST THAT LUGNUT FROM TH' SKY BEFORE HE CAN WARN OTHERS!

SKR OOM

NOW HURRY UP YOU EGG-PLANTS!! WE'VE GOTTA' GIT THIS DONE FAST!! WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TI...huh!!!

IT'S TOO LATE -puff-puff- LOOK!

HOLY FIREHYDRANTSPONGECAKE

HOME, JAMES!!

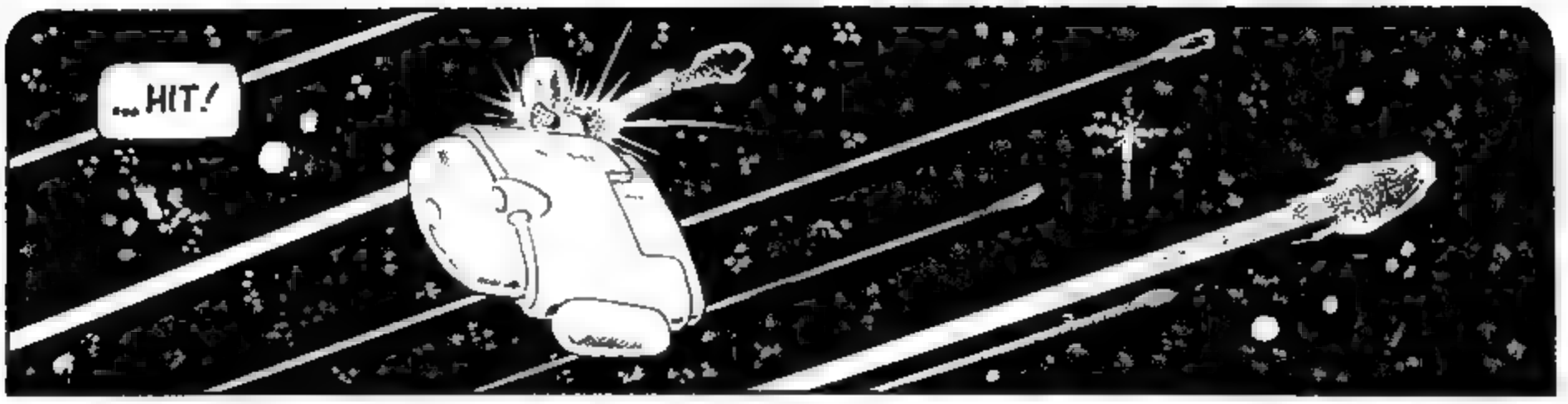
BOY THIS IS FUN! HEY!! WHAT HAPPENED TO YER FRISBEE?

ANNUAL FRISBEE THROW

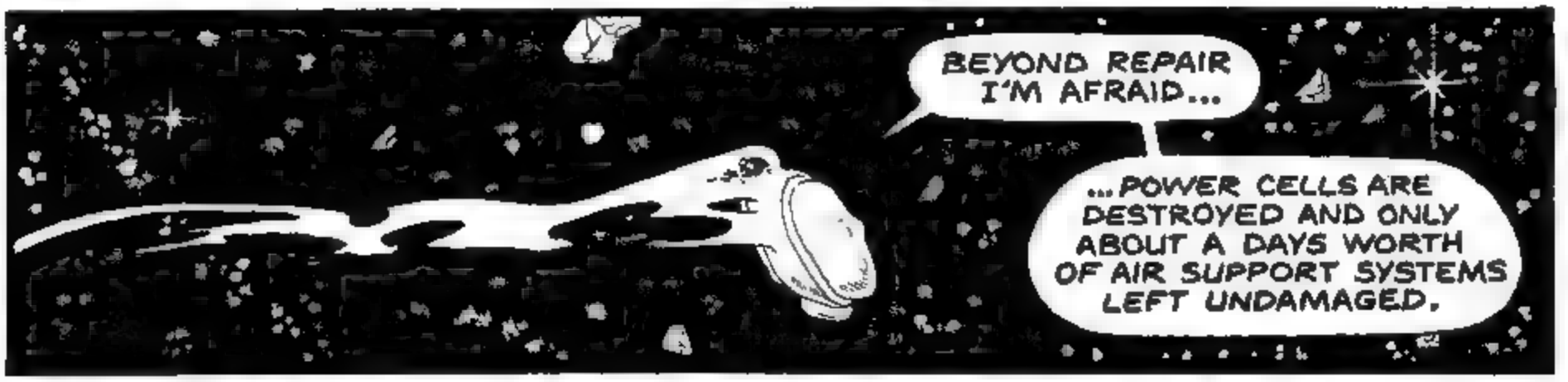
THERE'S KRYPTON UP AHEAD.
MY MEETING SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG.
WE'LL TRY TO FIT IN A LITTLE SIGHTSEEING BEFORE RETURNING TO SLEMM.
YES,...THANKS TO SYR-ZEK.
ANOTHER MASTER MIGHT NOT HAVE LET YOU BRING YOUR FAMILY ON A BUSINESS TRIP.

SURVIVING SON
GREAT GODS!! THE ENTIRE PLANET IS EXPLODING!!
NO TIME TO REVERSE COURSE!! PRAY WE'RE NOT...

eeac


...HIT!

ARE YOU WELL KLYT-SOR?
KYST AND I ARE FINE, DEAR!
BUT...THE SHIP!!


BEYOND REPAIR I'M AFRAID...
...POWER CELLS ARE DESTROYED AND ONLY ABOUT A DAYS WORTH OF AIR SUPPORT SYSTEMS LEFT UNDAMAGED.

LYK-TER! A ROCKET!!
PERHAPS HELP!
NO...
..TOO SMALL.
BUT WHAT CAN IT'S PURPOSE BE?

IT'S CLOSE ENOUGH TO REACH WITH THE DOCKING CORD.
I'M BRINGING IT IN...

...THERE MAY BE SOMETHING ABOARD WE CAN USE.

LYK-TER!

IT'S A KRYPTONIAN CHILD!

GODS! SOMEONE MUST HAVE KNOWN THE PLANET WAS DOOMED AND ATTEMPTED TO SAVE THIS CHILD!

HE'LL NEVER KNOW HIS ATTEMPT FAILED...

THIS CHILD IS DEAD!

THE SHEER FORCE OF THE EXPLOSION WAS TOO MUCH FOR THIS SMALL ROCKET!

KAL-EL... IT MUST BE HIS NAME.

THE CONTROLS ARE SET FOR EARTH.

CLOSE IT LYK-TER

THE KRYPTONIANS ARE SUCH AN UGLY RACE! IT'S DEAD AND THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO.

NOTHING WE CAN DO FOR HIM, KLYT-SOR, BUT WHAT ABOUT KYST?

TWO KRYPTONIAN PARENTS THOUGHT FIRST OF THEIR CHILD AS THEY FACED DEATH. CAN WE DO LESS?

THE CONTROLS HAVE BEEN PRE-SET...

...KYST WILL FLY TO THE PRIMITIVE PLANET EARTH. THE KRYPTONIAN MUST HAVE KNOWN THAT THE EARTH WOULD SUPPORT LIFE FROM OUR SYSTEM.

WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT HE'LL BE FOUND AND CARED FOR AS WE MIGHT HAVE.

GOOD-BYE KYST...

...WE'LL MEET DEATH EASIER KNOWING YOU'RE SAFE...

...GOOD-LUCK."

# PICK OF THE LITTER

SNIK

SNIK
SNUK
POOK
POOK
POOK

FLARP!

IT'S A BOY!!

# Watcher from the Skies

LIKE A LOATHESOME **SCAVENGER** THE **HALF-MOON** SCOURS THE SEAS...FROM AFRICA TO THE INDIES ...SEEKING PRECIOUS **HUMAN** CARGO.

SHE IS A **SLAVE SHIP**... AND FOR EVERY WRETCHED SOUL SHACKLED TO HER TIMBERS... **CAPTAIN BULL HYLER'S** PURSE GROWS HEAVIER WITH GOLD.

THEY FILE ABOARD NOW...THE SALT FROM SWEAT AND BLOOD STINGING THEIR EYES... MUSKETS AIMED AT THEIR EBONY, WHIP-SLASHED BACKS-AND CAP'T HYLER **SMILES.**

**MOVE**, YE BLACK SCUM!

EASY WITH THE LASH..I WANT 'EM **ALIVE** WHEN WE REACH **VIRGINIA!**

SUDDENLY, A LOW **CACKLING** SOUND SIEZES HYLER'S ATTENTION...

WHAT IN..

THE **MALAYSIAN**, BEEN **BABBLIN'** LIKE A **MADMAN** ALL MORNIN'! SAYS HE **SAW** SOME-THIN' ON HIS WATCH LAST NIGHT —

A **VISION!**

LING-TO SEEN IT... OUTA THE SKY BRIGHT 'N SHINY..

THIS ISLAND'S OUR LAST STOP... AN' WE NEED EVERY HAND. BUT WHEN WERE OUT T'SEA ..IN A DAY OR SO... WE'LL TOSS THE SLANTY-EYED DEVIL OVERBOARD!

AYE, CAP'N..

THEY BE BACK... T-TO **KILL US ALL!**

AN' BRING THAT BLACK WENCH TO MY CABIN TONIGHT!

THAT NIGHT, WHILE THE CREW SLEEPS, LING-TO SCRAMBLES ON DECK – AND WAITS...

TH-THEY HERE!

SWIFTLY...SILENTLY... AN **UNEARTHLY** CRAFT DESCENDS FROM THE SKY –

– AND HOVERS OVER THE SLAVE SHIP–

–WATCHING–

Y-YE BLACK ONES LOVE T'FIGHT, EH?... **AAAG!**

–STUDYING–

ZZZZZZ

ZZZZ

– REMEMBERING...

THEN... THE INVADER **VANISHES** INTO THE HEAVENS!

G-GOT TO **WARN** CAP'N...

**NEXT TIME... IT BE – TOO LATE!**

BUT NEXT MORNING...

CAP'N.. NO!

QUIET, FOOL!

YOU SLAVES! WATCH... AND LEARN! WE'VE A LONG VOYAGE AHEAD-

-AND THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE VOICE IN COMMAND... MINE!

AND IF ONE **SACRIFICE** IS NEEDED TO PROVE THE POINT -SO BE IT!

BEFORE HYLER CAN STRIKE, THE SKY EXPLODES WITH A FURY THAT CUTS THROUGH STEEL— AND FLESH...

SIZZLE

AAAAA

THE GHASTLY RAY SWEEPS ACROSS THE DECK LIKE A FIERY SCYTHE —

—YET, MIRACULOUSLY, THE SLAVES ARE **SPARED**...

... AND THEY REALIZE... **THIS** INVADER IS NOT TO BE FEARED —

THE STRANGE CRAFT **DEPARTS**... AND THE DECK IS SILENT... BUT FOR THE RAVING OF **ONE SURVIVOR**... HIS **MIND SHATTERED** BY WHAT HE HAS SEEN...

HE **CANNOT UNDERSTAND** WHAT HE HAS SEEN... FOR HE HAS NOT BEEN INSIDE THE SPACECRAFT-

—WHERE THE **PILOT** NOW LEANS BACK AND **SMILES**...

THE **RESCUE MISSION** IS A **SUCCESS**.

STORY: BILL KELLEY
ART: TOM YEATES

THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR TOLERATING A...

# U.F.O. indoors

MARVY, **LOOK!** THERE'S **ANOTHER** ONE!

## ...a BIG MARVY Spectacular by Howard Cruse

WELL, LET'S GET IT **NOW** OR WE'LL BE UP **ALL NIGHT!**

WHAT A **BOTHER!**

©1980 by H. Cruse

THE **WINDOWS** ARE CLOSED! HOW DO THEY GET **IN?**

**C'MERE,** YOU!

WATCH OUT FOR THAT **PLANT!**

HEY, GIMME A **BREAK,** WILLYA?

**HOLD ON** WHILE I **SWAT** IT!

NNZIP!

**YIPES! EASY** WITH THAT **BROOM!**

THEY'RE **SLIPPERY** LITTLE BASTARDS, DAMMIT!

KEEP IT OUT OF THE **KITCHEN!** I JUST **MOPPED!**

**SHOO** IT **THIS** WAY, MARVY!

YA GOTTA **PANIC** 'EM OR THEY **DOUBLE BACK!**

**ATTA GIRL!**

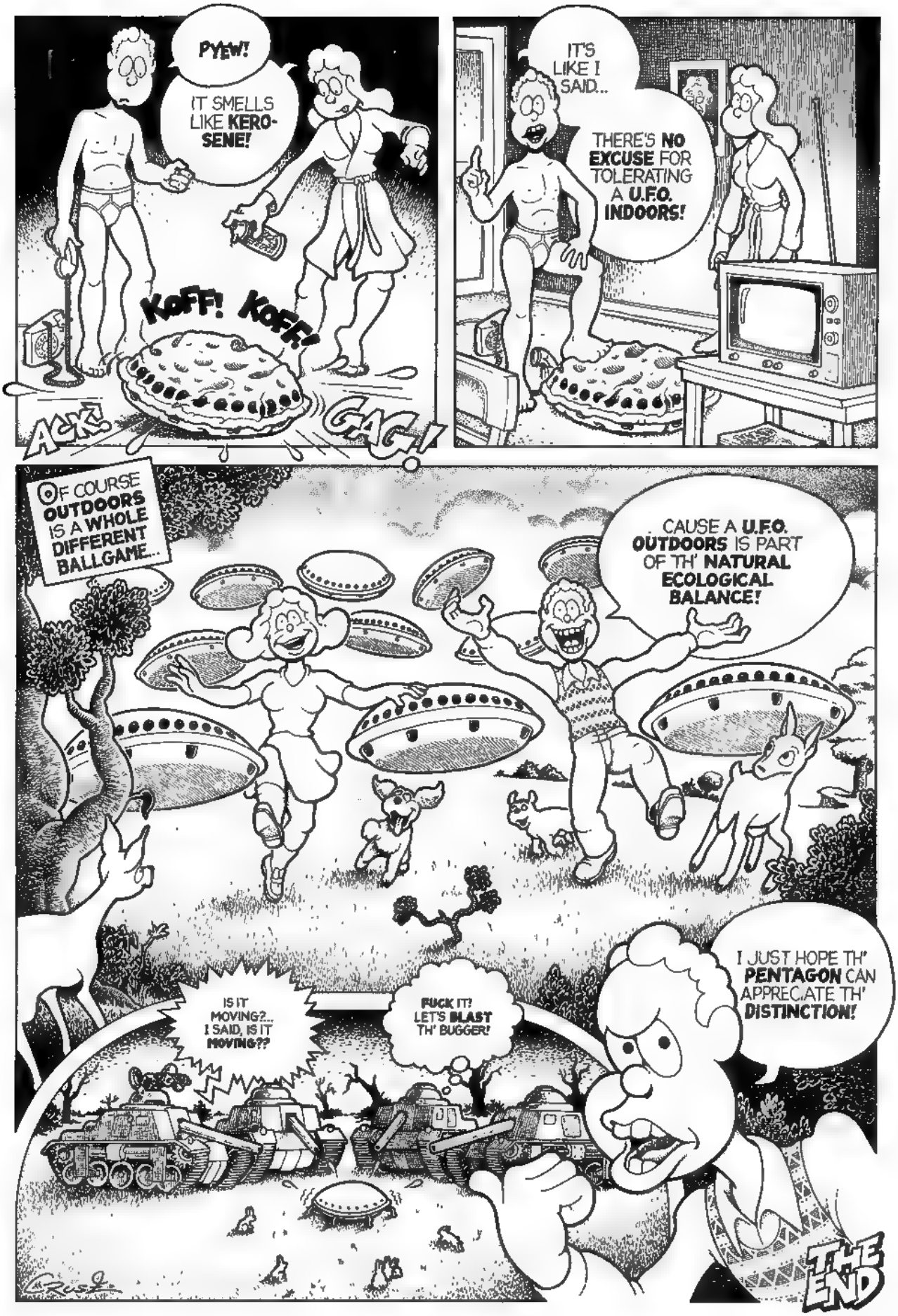
THIS OUGHTA **STUN** IT!

WASH!

HURRY UP, ROSEY... IT'S STILL **VIBRATING!**

I'LL GRAB SOME **BUG SPRAY!**

BONK BONK BONK


PYEW!
IT SMELLS LIKE KERO-SENE!
KOFF! KOFF!
ACK!
GAG!
IT'S LIKE I SAID...
THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR TOLERATING A U.F.O. INDOORS!
OF COURSE OUTDOORS IS A WHOLE DIFFERENT BALLGAME...
CAUSE A U.F.O. OUTDOORS IS PART OF TH' NATURAL ECOLOGICAL BALANCE!
I JUST HOPE TH' PENTAGON CAN APPRECIATE TH' DISTINCTION!
IS IT MOVING?... I SAID, IS IT MOVING??
FUCK IT! LET'S BLAST TH' BUGGER!
THE END

# Outpost

IT WAS A COOL CLEAR NIGHT ON **SIRIUS 12**, THE KIND YOU USUALLY ONLY GET ON **URANUS** IN JULY.

AS USUAL, ALL WAS QUIET SAVE FOR THE SHRILL CHIRPING OF THE **FEATHERED VEITCH** (A BIZARRE TYPE OF CHIPMUNK). EXCEPT FOR THE MONTHLY SUPPLY SHIP, VISITORS FRIENDLY OR OTHERWISE WERE **RARE**.

THIS WAS TO BE **HOWEVER** ONE OF THOSE **RARE** NIGHTS!

THE SHIP'S OCCUPANT IS BROUGHT TO THE COMMANDER'S OFFICE.

ART: T. YEATES
STORY: LARRY SHELL

THE COMMANDER BADE HIS MEN TO LEAVE AND INQUIRED TO THE STRANGERS BUSINESS WHERE UPON HE DREW SEVERAL PAPERS FROM HIS BRIEFCASE.

UPON FINDING OUT THE CONTENT OF THE PAPERS, THE COMMANDER **FLEW INTO A RAGE** AND ORDERED THE STRANGER EJECTED FROM THE PLANET!

HOWEVER, BEFORE TAKING OFF, HE WARNS THEM **HE SHALL RETURN!**

THREE DAYS LATER HE RETURNED, BUT NOT ALONE!

GET THE COMMANDER!

THAT CRY DIED IN HIS THROAT!

THE STATION BURSTS INTO ACTION . . .

. . . BUT TO NO AVAIL . . . .

UNTIL FINALLY, IT WAS OVER, THE POST ALL BUT ANNIHILATED!

MOST OF THE SURVIVORS WERE WOUNDED, INCLUDING THE COMMANDER.

YOU KNOW ROBERTS, THAT WAS ONE TOUGH INSURANCE SALESMAN!

END

"BOCLAND--ROUGE MOON HOLLOWED OUT BY MY RACE LONG, LONG CYCLES AGO. MACHINES WORK AT YOUR EXCAVATION STILL. BOCLAND--MUSEUM OF MYSTERIES, NURTURED BY OUR SOVEREIGNS OF THE PEOPLES, YOU HOLD THE SECRETS OF ALL FOR THE FUTURE OF ALL."

"BOCLAND--THE WONDEROUS MYSTERIES OF OUR GALAXY REST WITHIN YOUR CHAMBERS--IT WOULD TAKE MORE CYCLES THAN MOST CARE TO SPEND TO SEE YOUR ALL, HEAR YOUR ALL, SENSE YOUR ALL. BOCLAND--SO LARGE YOU WILL NEVER BE FILLED, AND LARGER GROW YOU STILL. YET, AS YOUR INQUISITOR, I HAVE SPENT MY LIFE TRYING TO DO AS MUCH, BOCLAND, MY LOVE."

"BOCLAND--HOME TO ME FOR MY REMAINING CYCLES, AND I, LAS'AK, NOW YOUR LORD AND MASTER. THIS HONOR BESTOWED ON ME BY MY LIEGE AS REWARD AND AS DUTY TO THE PEOPLES. BOCLAND--THERE IS LITTLE IN MY LIFE THAT IS NOT YOURS. AND ONE DAY ALL YOUR MYSTERIES WILL BE MY SEPULCHER."

# PRETENDING

STORY: ERIC DINEHART • ART: MIKE GUSTOVICH • LETTERING: CARRIE SPIEGLE • COLORS: S.OLIFF/S.PARSONS

"THERE ARE NO REGRETS, MY BOCLAND— LONG AGO I UNDERSTOOD THE GREAT UNSPOKEN SECRET AND ITS SADNESS AND TRUE I HAVE REMAINED TO IT AND YOU—BUT MY LAST CYCLES DRAW NEAR AND STILL WE SEEK ONE WHO WILL SHARE THE SORROW THAT WE KNOW, ONE WHO CAN SEE THE SECRET AND BE YOUR INQUISITOR."

"I HAVE WATCHED OUR SQUIRES, AS I WAS WATCHED SO LONG AGO, MY BOCLAND, IN LIKE APPRENTICESHIP TO YOU. THE SECRET CANNOT BE TOLD AND SO THEY COME SEARCHING FOR IT, KNOWING HERE IT IS WITH YOU. I GUIDE AS BEST I CAN, BUT THE SECRET ELUDES THEM."

"HAVE I FAILED, MY BOCLAND? WILL THERE BE NOTHING FOR YOU BUT ESCORTS WHO RETURN FROM SPACE AS MERCHANTS? WILL NOT ONE SQUIRE SEEK THE MYSTERIES BY SEEING BEYOND WHAT IS SEEN? I PLAY AT HAPPINESS, BUT I FEAR FOR YOU, MY BOCLAND, AND FOR MYSELF. THERE IS NO ONE TO CARRY ON THE SECRET."

"I HAVE WATCHED EACH SQUIRE DEPART AND HAVE WATCHED THEM AS INQUISITORS FAIL—THOSE DESPONDENT, OVERWHELMED BY YOUR GRANDEUR--THOSE UNWISE, BELIEVING A GALAXY OF TRUE ARTIFACTS ABOUNDS—"

"—AND MOST DISAPPOINTING. THOSE WHO KNOW THE DUTY, WHO REVERE THE MYSTERY, BUT CANNOT SEE THE SECRET AND LEAVE WITH IT STILL INSIDE YOU."

"I TALK WITH YOU THUS, MY BOCLAND, BECAUSE IT IS TIME AGAIN FOR ANOTHER TO LEAVE. HE SHOWS PROMISE, THIS SQUIRE TC'GAOS—HE NEVER CEASES HIS TALK OF ROAMING SPACE IN SEARCH OF ARTIFACTS —HE TRULY LOVES YOUR MYSTERIES—BUT I AM AGAIN AFRAID—I HAVE NOT IN HIM EITHER SEEN THE SECRET."

"THE SELECTED PEOPLES AND SQUIRE TC'GAOS ARE FINISHED WITH THEIR TIME IN YOU, MY BOCLAND, AND AS ALWAYS I HAVE DONE, THEY WILL VIEW TOGETHER NOW YOUR FINAL MYSTERY. WILL TC'GAOS SEE THE SECRET, MY BOCLAND? WILL HE SEE WHAT THE PEOPLES NEVER SEE?"

"AS YOUR LORD AND MASTER, MY BOCLAND, I WILL OVERSEE THE FINAL ARTIFACT DISPLAY WITH THE SQUIRE AND THE CHOSEN PEOPLES. IN THE BEGINNING I DID THIS FOR THE PEOPLES ONLY, BUT TO SEE A TRUE INQUISITOR IN A SQUIRE, JUST ONE SQUIRE, IT HAS BECOME NOW MY FINAL HOPE."

"IT IS GOOD TO GAZE AGAIN UPON THE TREASURED ARTIFACT I FOUND SO LONG AGO. THE PEOPLES ALL WONDER WHY THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO SEE THIS PART OF YOU, MY BOCLAND. CURIOUSITY IN THEM I HOPE FOR. MAKE THEM WONDER ALL, MY BOCLAND, WHY THIS MYSTERY IS YOUR LAST."

"I TELL THEM SOME SMALL TRUTH, MY BOCLAND. HOW I DISCOVERED OUR TREASURE MANY CYCLES AGO WHEN I WAS A YOUNG AND BRASH INQUISITOR. LET THEM BELIEVE IT IS PRIDE THAT MAKES ME SHOW IT THUS."

"I GRANT THE CUSTOMARY HONOR NOW TO TC'GAOS. HE WILL TELL THAT I HAVE MANDATED THIS TREASURE TO BE VIEWED THE VERY LAST OF ALL YOUR ARTIFACTS—THAT EVEN HE, SQUIRE TC'GAOS, HAS NEVER SEEN THIS ARTIFACT IN ALL THE CYCLES HE HAS SPENT AS AN ESCORT INSIDE YOU."

"HE WILL SAY THAT AFTER VIEWING THE ARTIFACT THEY ARE REQUESTED TO LEAVE YOU, MY BOCLAND, NEVER TO RETURN. AND THEN HE WILL OFFER UP MY LITTLE LIE,— THAT I ASK IT THUS, SO THAT THE BILLIONS OF OTHER PEOPLES IN THE GALAXY WILL BE AFFORDED ROOM TO WONDER AT THE MANY MYSTERIES YOU DISPLAY."

"HE SPEAKS THIS LIE OF MINE, AS IF IT WERE THE TRUTH, FOR TO HIM I HAVE LIED AS WELL. BUT IT MUST BE THUS, FOR MOST OF ALL, THE GREAT SECRET IS HERE. THE PEOPLES WILL LEAVE AND THE MYSTERY WILL LIE TO THEM SILENTLY, FOREVER I PRAY. BUT, MY BOCLAND, TC'GAOS..."

"...WILL HE SEE WHAT CANNOT BE TOLD?"

OOF!

STOP! NO, DON'T! PLEASE, STOP!

OH, GOD, PLEASE, NO! NOT NOW! PLEASE!

PLEASE!-HUH-PLEASE, LISTEN TO ME!

I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU WANT...

UH!-WHA--?

...JUST *LISTEN* TO ME.

MY NAME... IT'S *JULIE*! JULIA ENCINAS.

SHUT UP, DAMN YOU! SHUT UP!

FWOOM

DAMN YOU!

HEY!

LISTEN TO ME! JUST *LISTEN*! I'LL PRETEND WITH YOU. I'LL BE WHATEVER YOU WANT. I'LL *BE* YOUR LOVER. I'LL DO ANYTHING FOR YOU... BUT *PLEASE*, JUST LET ME BE A PART OF IT.

YOU'RE KIDD-REALLY? ...JU--?

IT'S JULIE. I'M NOT KIDDING.

UH--I'M CURT--UH, MERRIT.

I'M SORRY!

DON'T SAY THAT. IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT. I DON'T CARE. JUST LISTEN TO ME.

WE'LL PRETEND. I'LL BE YOUR GIRL, CURT ...I'LL PRETEND I LOVE YOU--BE YOUR LOVER. WE CAN PRETEND WE'RE HAVING A PICNIC.

CURT--DARLING, WOULD IT BE SO WRONG FOR US TO GO AHEAD AND BE MARRIED?

NO, IT WOULDN'T BE WRONG. I'D LIKE THAT. I REALLY WOULD.

YOU'RE MY WIFE NOW. I-I LOVE YOU, JULIE!

AND I LOVE YOU. LOVE ME BACK, CURT! LOVE ME BACK!

NO! DON'T LEAVE ME, CURT! DON'T!

I SHOULD... I GOTTA--

PLEASE STAY WITH ME, CURT. JUST TALK TO ME. TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.

WELL, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. I WAS SCARED AND THEN I SAW YOU AND I JUST...

...KINDA WENT--

SHHH...IT DOESN'T MATTER. NOT NOW. JUST HELP ME PRETEND. TALK SO YOU'LL KNOW ME, CURT. TELL ME... TELL ME WHAT HURTS.

TELL ME WHAT HURTS YOU.

OH...WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, I RAN AWAY FROM HOME. I WANTED TO RUN AWAY SO BADLY. IT WAS STUPID OF ME, BUT I HATED THE BARRIO SO MUCH. I--I TOOK A RIDE WITH AN OLD MAN; A STRANGER IN A BEAUTIFUL CAR. HE SAID HE WOULD TAKE ME TO HIS HOME IN THE VALLEY.
HE BEGAN...TO TOUCH ME. I JUMPED OUT OF THE CAR. EVEN THOUGH I HAD TO WALK SEVERAL MILES HOME, NO ONE MISSED ME.

I NEVER TOLD ANYONE WHAT I DID. I NEVER HAVE. I WAS SO ASHAMED. I COULD NEVER TELL THEM THAT I WANTED TO ESCAPE. I COULDN'T TELL THEM I HATED MY LIFE.

I WAS SO ... STUPID.

NO, NO YOU WEREN'T. I UNDERSTAND. I'VE FELT THAT WAY, TOO.

LISTEN...I JUST GRADUATED. YOU CAN PRETEND ANYTHING YOU WANT WITH ME. WE CAN MAKE IT TOGETHER. I'LL START MY OWN BUSINESS AND I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT.

I WANT CHILDREN.

NO! I MEAN--THAT'D RUIN IT.

WHY?

IT JUST WOULD, THAT'S ALL.

YOU ARE MY LOVER. YOU ARE MY--HUSBAND. WHY ARE YOU SO ANGRY?

YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND!

YES I WOULD. TELL ME.

WELL, I--I WAS AN ONLY CHILD. AND MY PARENTS GOT A DIVORCE WHEN I WAS ABOUT TWELVE. BUT THEY FOUGHT OVER ME IN COURT. GOD, IT WENT ON FOREVER. AND--WELL, MY MOTHER'S LAWYER MADE ME TESTIFY ABOUT ALL THE TIMES I'D SEEN MY FATHER DRINKING.

SHE PROBABLY DID THE RIGHT THING. I'VE KNOWN IT FOR YEARS, BUT--I CAN'T FORGIVE HER. I CAN'T FORGIVE HIM! I HATE THEM! I HATE WHAT HAPPENED AND I DON'T WANT TO EVEN PRETEND TO BE A PARENT! YOU SEE, DON'T YOU? I CAN'T!

IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN, CURT. NOT WITH US. I DON'T HATE YOU. DON'T HATE YOURSELF. I'LL STAY RIGHT HERE WITH YOU...FOREVER.

ALL RIGHT, JULIE, I'LL TRY IT. ANYTHING YOU WANT. IT'S NOT THAT HARD TO—PRETEND I LOVE YOU.

HOW MANY CHILDREN SHALL WE HAVE, DARLING?

TWO, THREE— NO, HALF-A-DOZEN! AS MANY AS YOU WANT, LITTLE WIFE.

LET'S PRETEND WE'LL HAVE LOTS! AND THEY'LL ALL GROW UP, CURT. STRONG AND HEALTHY.

YES! YES!

AND THEY'LL HAVE CHILDREN OF THEIR OWN! LET'S PRETEND. PLEASE, CURT!

AND THEY'LL LIVE ON, BEYOND US! THEY'LL CARRY OUR LIVES!

YES! YES!

PLEASE, PRETEND THEY'LL LIVE ON! PLEASE, CURT!

YES!

PLEASE! FOREVER!

YES!

OH, GOD, CURT! PRETEND! PLEASE! PRETEND!

"ONCE AGAIN THE PEOPLES DEPART. MEMORIES ARE ALL THEY WILL HAVE OF US. I CAN ONLY HOPE THEY PONDER AS I WOULD WISH."

"BUT MY BOCLAND, HE REMAINS, THIS SQUIRE TC'GAOS. MY BOCLAND, HE UNDERSTANDS! I SEE IT IN HIM. AT LAST, AT LAST! ONE TO BE YOUR INQUISITOR! ONE TO CARRY ON FOR US, TO QUEST ANEW FOR MYSTERIES. HE DOES NOT SPEAK, MY BOCLAND! HE SEES THE GREAT SECRET AND KNOWS...

"...THE SECRET CANNOT BE TOLD!"

END

IT **COULDN'T** HAVE BEEN PIRATES! UNLESS YOU WERE ON A MAPPING ASSIGNMENT LIKE MY CO-PILOT AND I WERE, THERE WAS NO REASON TO BE HERE. TWENTY LIGHT MINUTES FROM NOWHERE--AND YET WE WERE BEING **FIRED UPON!**

GNUC, GET ME LASER CONTACT WITH THOSE LUNATICS!

FEJTI!!

THIS IS FEDERATION RANGER PETE PETROGRADE HERE! ALRIGHT, BLAST-HAPPY, WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?!

RANGER RETROGRADE, I AM COLONEL HAMMERFACE--HUNTING IS MY SPORT, AND MY PROFESSION. MERELY SURRENDER YOUR UNUSUAL CO-PILOT TO ME, AND WE'LL BOTH BE ON OUR WAY WITH A MINIMUM OF FUSS.

WHAT?! FORGET IT, PLUG UGLY, YOU'RE BLUFFING! AND THE NAME IS *PETRO*GRADE, HAMMERFISH!

RETROGRADE...I NEVER BLUFF!

OH-OH.

# OPEN SEASON

STORY AND ART BY KEN MACKLIN/ SCRIPT BY TOREN SMITH/ LETTERING BY CARRIE SPIEGLE

COLORS BY STEVE OLIFF

RETROGRADE, IN ORDER TO CONSERVE BOTH MY AMMUNITION, AND YOUR PRESENTLY HYPOTHETICAL OLD AGE, I SUGGEST YOU IMMEDIATELY PUT DOWN AND SURRENDER!

MAIN TUBES ARE OUT, GNUC, BUT DON'T WORRY! I'M A *GENIUS* AT DEAD-STICK LANDINGS!

WUMP!

!!JAFJAF

GNUC, UNLESS YOU WANT YOUR EYESTALKS TIED INTO A CLOVE HITCH, *SILENCE* IS ADVISED.

HEY, I REMEMBER *YOU*, HAMMERFISH! WEREN'T YOU ARRESTED FOR POACHING ON TALUS IV ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO?

ANCIENT HISTORY, RETROGRADE! MY METHODS HAVE RATHER CHANGED SINCE THOSE DAYS OF MY IMPETUOUS YOUTH. I AM STILL COMMISSIONED BY PRIVATE INTERESTS TO HUNT THE MOST ELUSIVE SPECIES IN THE GALAXY--BUT SCRUPULOUSLY WITHIN THE LAW.

TODAY, DEAR FELLOW, I AM HUNTING THE MUCILE--THE MOST COVETED SKIN IN NINE SYSTEMS. YOUR CO-PILOT IS JUST SUCH AN ANIMAL. YOU WILL TURN HIM OVER TO ME...OR BE BLOWN TO FLINDERS!

1045

FISHF!!

YOU POMPOUS CROOK! MY THREE-EYED FRIEND IS A *PROTECTED SPECIES*, PRACTICALLY A FEDERATION CITIZEN, AND DEFINITELY OFF LIMITS TO A BLOATED FASCIST BUTCHER LIKE YOURSELF, SO GET LOST OR SOMETHING!

VERY WELL. REGRETTABLY, I SHALL BE FORCED TO BOARD YOUR CRIPPLED VESSEL AND REMOVE THE CREATURE MYSELF!

THAT OVERBEARING NERK! HE TALKS BIG, BUT JUST ONE GLIMPSE OF THIS "ANNIHILATOR 12" SPECIAL ISSUE BLASTER WILL CHANGE HIS TUNE!

OKAY, HAMMERFISH, LET'S SKIP THE GARBAGE! I'M NO SITTING DUCK, SO CUT YOUR LOSSES AND HIT THE SKY, PAL!

BLADDADOW!

BLAM BLAM!

PAKOW-POW!

PTWEEE

PTWEEOW!

ALAS, YOU ARE A FOOL, RETROGRADE. A SPORTING ONE, BUT A FOOL NONETHELESS.

THANK YOU, JEEVES. WOULD YOU HAND ME MY ALKADIAN DUAL ACTION 2001 WITH THE ANTI-MATTER PROJECTILES...OR PERHAPS THE RUTHERGIAN MATTER DISMANTLER...

HMM...YOU KNOW, GNUC, I THINK HE MIGHT NOT BE BLUFFING, AFTER ALL.

ZZAAY!!

ESCAPE WAS NECESSARY, BUT HOW? THINKING SWIFTLY, I STUFFED GNUC INTO MY FIELD PACK, AND STRAPPED US INTO THE EMERGENCY EJECTION SEAT.

SIT TIGHT, GNUC!

EJECT

POF!

I GUESS THE EJECTION SEAT WAS DESIGNED TO BE USED AT HIGHER ALTITUDES TO GIVE THE LANDING CHUTES TIME TO OPEN!

SPECTACULAR! BRAVO! A FINE EFFORT, OLD FELLOW!

YOU'LL NEVER GET AWAY WITH THIS, HAMMERFISH! MY DEBROGLIE WAVE RADIO HAS BEEN BROADCASTING THIS WHOLE FIASCO--INCLUDING OUR EXACT LOCATION--TO FEDERATION AUTHORITIES!

SO SORRY TO DISILLUSION YOU, RETROGRADE, BUT YOU ENTERED TYLEAN SPACE ABOUT THIRTY MINUTES AGO AND FEDERATION LAW NO LONGER APPLIES. THE TYLEANS, WHILE ECOLOGICALLY ZEALOUS, DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE MUCILE AS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES!

TYLEAN SPACE REGULATIONS VOL. 42

IN FACT, THEY CONSIDER THEM AGRICULTURAL PESTS!

I ALWAYS GO BY THE REGULATIONS... SO HAND HIM OVER!

HALT! YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!

WHA...?! TYLEAN POLICE!! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I'VE GONE STRICTLY BY THE BOOK!

OBVIOUSLY, COLONEL HAMMERFACE HADN'T READ FAR ENOUGH. TRUE, GNUC WASN'T PROTECTED BY TYLEAN LAW--BUT I WAS. SEEMS MY SPECIES IS QUITE RARE IN TYLEAN SPACE.

---

HAMMERFACE WAS DEPORTED FOR ATTEMPTED POACHING AND POSSESSION OF RESTRICTED WEAPONS. LUCKILY, THE TYLEANS NEVER SEARCHED MY FIELD PACK, SO ALL GNUC AND I HAD TO DO WAS WHILE AWAY THE FORTY HOURS UNTIL THE FEDERATION RESCUE SHIP ARRIVED.

DID YOU BRING THE "DIAMONDBACK" CARDS?

ƎLTƆ K.

END.

# THE MONSTER OF PLANET 9!

WRITTEN BY CHRISTY MARX ART BY PETER LEDGER LETTERING BY STAN SAKAI

50 JULES AWAY FROM THE DRONGO NEBULA, THE MIGHTY ENGINES OF MY CRUISER, THE GOOD SHIP FURBER, THRUM BENEATH MY POOVES.

AND I, ZORG, WARRIOR SUPREME OF THE LITHGO REALM, HAVE BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH THIS MOST CHERISHED OF MISSIONS--

--TO CONVEY TO THE THRONEWORLD THE PRINCESS HERSELF, THE INCOMPARABLE META BETA!

HOW BEAUTIFUL SHE IS! IF ONLY I COULD TELL HER HOW THE VERY SIGHT OF HER MAKES MY TWOMBLIES WEAK WITH PASSION!

BUT ALAS! THOUGH I AM A WARRIOR SUPREME, I HAVE BUT ONE NAME AND CANNOT CLAIM HER AS MY LOVE!

ONLY AS A LORD OF THE REALM MIGHT I GAIN A SECOND NAME, AND THUS BE ABLE TO--

BY THE FLODS! AN ION STORM!

WE ARE SEVERELY DAMAGED! THE SHIP IS NO LONGER SPACE-SAFE! I DARE NOT ENDANGER THE PRINCESS BY GOING ON!

THE CHARTS INDICATE THAT THIS WORLD, THE PLANET OG, IS FULL OF DANGEROUS LIFEFORMS, BUT UNINHABITED BY CIVILIZED LIFE.

IT WILL HAVE TO DO!

GROANING LIKE A MAD GALAH, THE FURBER LANDS HARD UPON THE WILD SURFACE OF OG!

FORTUNATE WE ARE THAT OUR ANCESTORS MADE THESE SHIPS WELL, AND EQUIPPED THEM WITH SELF-REPAIRING DRONES!

WITHOUT THEM, WE WOULD BE TRAPPED HERE!

AND YET, WOULD IT NOT BE PARADISE TO BE TRAPPED FOREVER WITH MY INCOMPARABLE META BETA!

BUT NO! I AM ZORG, AND I KNOW MY DUTY!

THE PRINCESS IS CALM AS I RELATE THAT WE MUST STAY HERE FOR MANY WODES WHILE THE SHIP REPAIRS ITSELF! "THEN LET US EXPLORE," SHE EXCLAIMS!

"NO, MY PRINCESS, I BEG YOU! OG IS FILLED WITH THINGS THAT BITE, SNAP, STING, CUT, RIP, REND AND TEAR!"

IN THE END, SHE HAS HER WAY, FOR HOW CAN I DENY HER ANYTHING SHE DESIRES? SHE HAS BUT TO GAZE AT ME WITH HER BRIGHT, IMPLORING EYES AND I AM HER SLAVE!

AS I FEARED! ALREADY A VICIOUS OGGIAN LIFEFORM IS UPON US!

THANK THE FLODS I AM WELL-ARMED AND MY AIM IS TRUE!

A LITTLE WAYS FURTHER, META BETA FINDS A WATERFALL THAT SPARKLES AND SINGS IN THE SUNLIGHT! "I MUST BATHE," SHE CRIES!

I STAND GUARD, BUT NOTHING DISTURBS THIS GLORIOUS MOMENT. AND THOUGH IT IS FORBIDDEN, I CANNOT TEAR MY SIGHT FROM HER DIVINE FORM!

OH, UNJUST UNIVERSE! I CANNOT BEAR IT! I MUST HOLD HER AND FEEL HER BREASTOIDS AGAINST ME! A GASP OF LUST ESCAPES MY PULSING FUNGIMS!

SHE TURNS AND REACHES OUT TO ME! "ZORG!" SHE CRIES, "HOW I HAVE LONGED FOR THIS MOMENT!"

HER NOSKER IS SMOOTH AND FIRM. I RUN MY FLANS ACROSS THE PERFECT TEXTURE OF HER KRINNS! MY FUNGIMS PULSE INTO NOTHINGNESS AND MY DAG THRUSTS INTO HER!

YET EVEN AS WE REACH THE PEAKS OF ECSTASY, META BETA SCREAMS!

IT IS A MONSTER! A SIGHT SO HIDEOUS, ALL THOUGHTS OF PASSION VANISH LIKE NANAS DOWN A FLU-FLU HOLE!

HEY! IT'S OKAY! I'M PEACEFUL! CAN YOU UNDERSTAND ME?!

MY SKIN BLITHERING IN HORROR, I SEIZE META BETA AND RUN FOR THE SAFETY OF THE SHIP! THE MONSTER IS CLOSE UPON US!

WAITAMINUTE! I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU! I NEED HELP!

WITH THE SPEED OF A WARRIOR SUPREME, I MAKE THE SHIP EVEN AS THE OGGIAN MONSTROSITY SCREECHES IN FRUSTRATION.

FOR THE LOVVA GOD, I'M TRAPPED HERE! DON'T GO AWAY! MY SHIP'S WRECKED AND MY RADIO'S OUT! I'VE BEEN HERE FOR MONTHS! I'M RUNNING OUT OF FOOD!

JEEZ, GIVE ME A BREAK, YOU GODDAMN ALIEN TOAD! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M IN TROUBLE? I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU, I SWEAR, JUST DON'T LEAVE WITHOUT ME!

OPEN UP! YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME! I'M DESPERATE!

I ARM MYSELF WITH A PROTO-NEUTO BLASTER. THE MONSTER HOWLS AND POUNDS USELESSLY UPON THE HULL!

AT LENGTH, SILENCE FALLS.

"REMAIN HERE, MY PRINCESS, WHILE I MAKE SURE THE BEAST IS GONE!"

"I WILL GO WITH YOU, ZORG, MY LOVE," SHE DECLARES AND I KNOW IT IS POINTLESS TO ARGUE.

I EMERGE CAUTIOUSLY, AWARE OF META BETA FOLLOWING ME.

AT ALL COSTS, I MUST PROTECT HER FROM HARM!

ALL RIGHT, YOU'LL LISTEN TO ME NOW THAT I'VE GOT MISS PUG-UGLY HERE! I'VE GOT THIS FEELING THAT YOU'VE GOT THE HOTS FOR HER, SO YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TAKE ANY CHANCES!

RIGHT THIS WAY! ONCE YOU GET A LOOK AT MY SHIP, IT'LL HAVE TO GET THROUGH EVEN YOUR DENSE SKULL THAT I'M STRANDED!

HOLD STILL, LADY! GOD, YOU'RE UGLIER THAN A WART ON A PIG'S ASS!

HEY, WITH A SHIP LIKE THIS, YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE SOME BRAINS! JEEZ, I HOPE THIS STUFF YOU'RE SECRETING ISN'T POISONOUS!

THE MONSTER HAS MY META BETA! IT WAS WAITING FOR US! I ALMOST DOUBT THAT IT IS A DUMB BEAST, BUT HOW COULD ANYTHING SO HIDEOUS BE INTELLIGENT?

ZZZZZZ

INTELLIGENT OR NOT, THE MONSTER MUST NOT DEFILE MY PRINCESS WITH ITS UNNATURAL LUSTS! I MUST AIM WITH ALL THE PRECISION I POSSESS!

DIE, MONSTER!

WHY ISN'T HE FOLLOWING? HE--HE WOULDN'T BE DUMB ENOUGH TO **SHOOT**, WOULD HE? OH, GOD, TELL ME HE WOU--

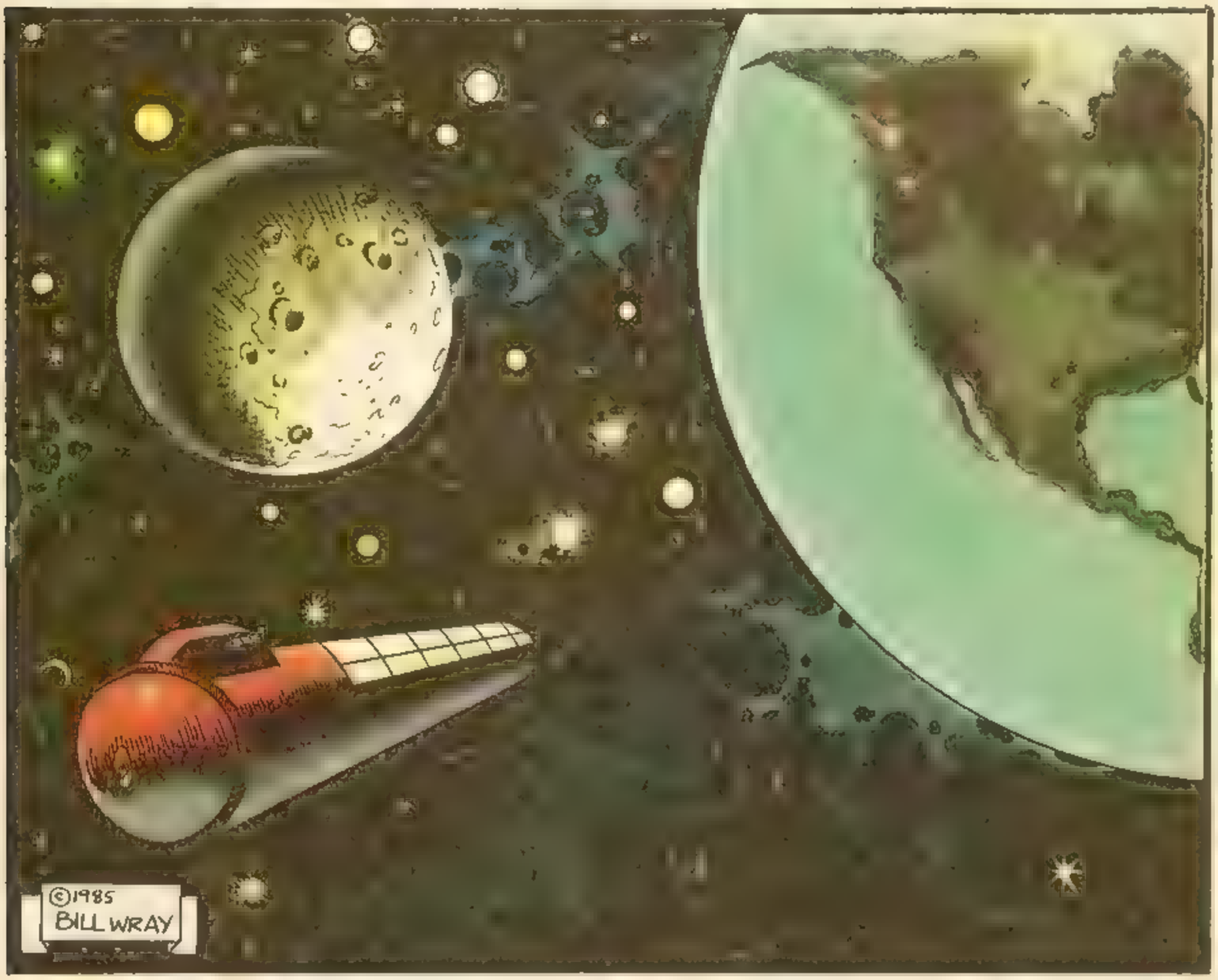
ITS RED ICHOR SPURTS UPON THE ALIEN GRASS OF OG!

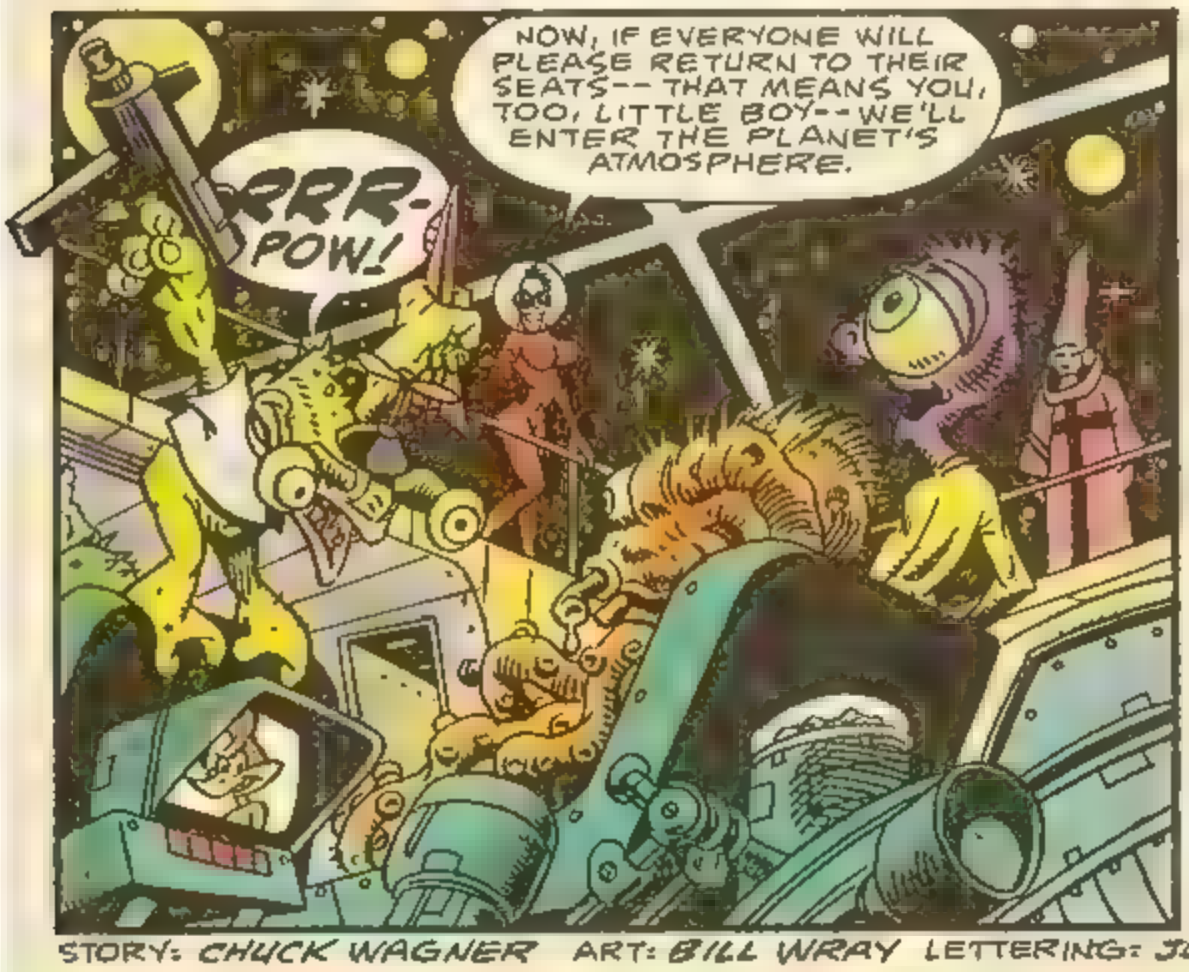
AND ALL IS WELL AGAIN! WE ENTWINE NOSKERS JOYOUSLY!

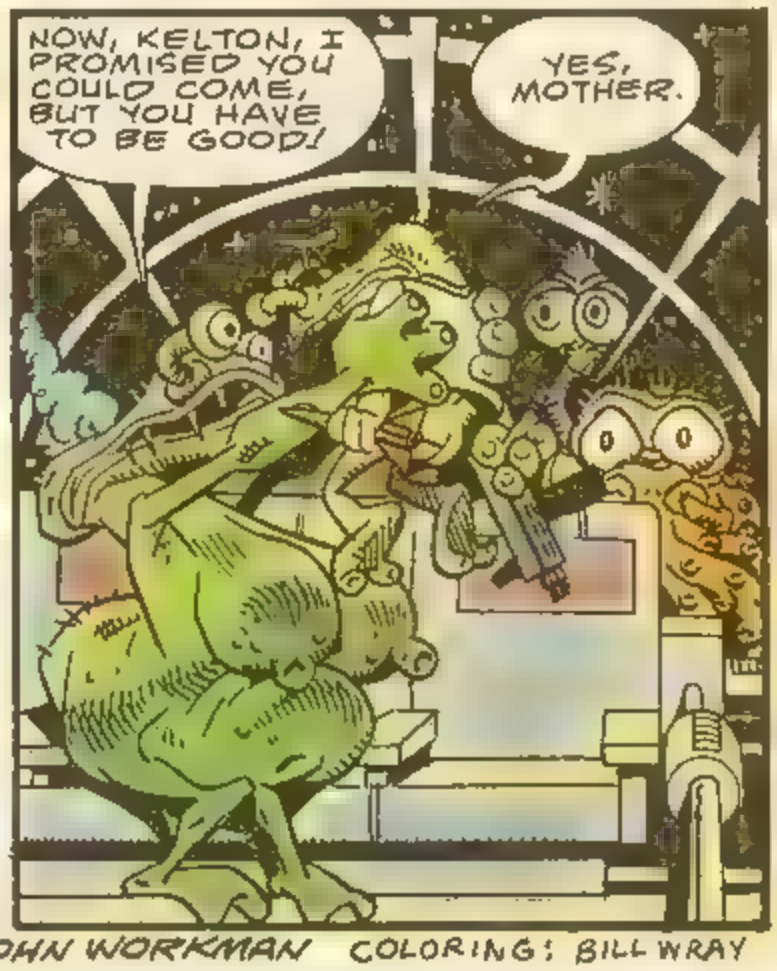
THE INCOMPARABLE META BETA IS MINE!

# NOW JR. BEHAVE YOURSELF

ON EARTH, THE TIME IS THE PRESENT. IN SPACE, IT'S TIME FOR ONE OF THE REGULAR TOUR-SHIPS TO VISIT EARTH FROM THE CAPELLAN STAR SYSTEM.





NOW, IF EVERYONE WILL PLEASE RETURN TO THEIR SEATS-- THAT MEANS YOU, TOO, LITTLE BOY--WE'LL ENTER THE PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE.
RRR-
POW!




STORY: CHUCK WAGNER ART: BILL WRAY LETTERING: JOHN WORKMAN COLORING: BILL WRAY

NOW, REMEMBER, AS WE ENTER THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, WE ARE SWITCHING ON THE INVISO-SHIELDING. THE SHIP AND EVERYONE WILL BE INVISO-SHIELDED AT ALL TIMES...

..BUT THOSE OF YOU WHO WISH TO LEAVE THE SHIP SHOULD REMAIN NEARBY...

...AND *PLEASE* DON'T BOND WITH THE ANIMALS OR TEASE THEM. THEY'RE INTELLIGENT, BUT PRIMITIVE, AND CAN BE DANGEROUS.

MOM, CAN WE PACK OUT AND SEE? I WANNA SEE THE ANIMALS UP CLOSE.

LEAVE THE SHIP? TURN YOU LOOSE? CERTAINLY NOT!

MALE FEMALE

Aww, gee, MOM.

NOW, KELTON, DON'T MAKE A FUSS. WE CAN SEE FINE FROM HERE. JUST LOOK...

...AREN'T THEY SAVAGE, KELTON? AREN'T YOU GLAD WE DON'T LIVE LIKE THAT? ...KELTON? ..KELTON?

KELTON! OH, NO, NOW WHERE'S HE OFF TO?

WHEEE! NOW FOR SOME REAL FUN!

HAVE YOU SEEN MY LITTLE KELTON?

NO. YOU BETTER F ND HIM. WE'LL BE LEAVING THIS VIEWING AREA SOON.

MEANWHILE..

I WONDER WHAT SHE'S CARRYING...

„THINK I'LL MENTALLY BOND WITH HER AND FIND OUT.

OH!

MY! MUST'VE BEEN A DRAFT!

THIS IS GREAT! I CAN SEE EVERYTHING! ALL HER THOUGHTS, TOO!

BOY, WILL HER HUSBAND REALLY BE SURPRISED WITH THIS!

Aha! THERE HE IS!

HE'S GOING TO LEARN TO MIND ME!

ZOOM!

SLAM

DRAT! M SSED HIM!

HI, HONEY! WHAT'S THAT?

YOUR BIRTHDAY CAKE. COME IN THE KITCHEN AND SEE

OH BOY!

NOW'S MY CHANCE!

SURPRISE!

Hee hee hee!

HOW NICE!

SO!

OH NO!

MMMNFF!

SPLAT!

KELTON! GET OUT OF THAT EARTH CREATURE THIS MINUTE!

OOW!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO ME--BUT IT FEELS LIKE IT'S GONE NOW..

SPUT! SPUT!

I'M SORRY. MY LITTLE KELTON CAN BE SO BAD SOMETIMES!

WH- WHO'S THERE?

MMMM... CHOCOLATE. SMACK!

WE'RE ALIENS FROM THE CAPELLAN SAFARI TOUR... TELL THEM YOU'RE SORRY, KELTON...

I'M SORRY.

WHAT A WEIRD BIRTHDAY PRESENT.

JUST WAIT TILL I GET YOU HOME!

I ASKED YOU *NOT* TO TEASE THE ANIMALS, LITTLE BOY. THEY CAN BE DAN-GEROUS.

ARE YOU LISTENING, KELTON?

YES, MA'AM.

WHAT DO YOU SAY, KELTON?

I'M SORRY.

NOW WE HAVE ONE MORE STOP BEFORE WE DEPART, SO PLEASE TRY TO ENJOY YOURSELVES WITHOLT BOTHERING THE ANIMALS.

KELTON WILL BE GOOD.

NOW, KELTON, WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT IS DOWN THERE... KELTON...?

.. KELTON! OH NO, NOT AGAIN! WHERE COULD HE BE!

A HALF MILE UNDERGROUND...

324 SILO

AJTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

I WONDER WHAT THIS BUTTON IS FORZ

STAGE 3

STAGE 2

FIRE

KELTON! YOU BAD BOY!

SMEK SMEK SMEK

WHY MUST YOU ALWAYS SPOIL MOMMY'S VACATIONS

WHAAA!

THERE ARE DEADLY FORCES IN THIS UNIVERSE....

NEARING TARGET WORLD, COMMISAR D'VEEJ...!

# INVASION!

ART AND STORY: ©TIMOTHY TRUMAN '85 -FER S.R.B.-
COLORS: SAM PARSONS

GOOD...!

LET'S GO DOWN!

WHAT!? THIS WORLD IS DEAD!

NEGATIVE, SIR -- ONLY THIS PART OF IT...

ALERT...!

...LOOKS LIKE A FIGHTER FORMATION, DEAD AHEAD!

HEAD STRAIGHT IN!

BREAK THEIR FORMATION!

WHEN THEY PEEL OFF-- NAIL'EM!

GREAT DRUILLET! THEY AREN'T BREAKING!

...THEY AREN'T...

AIEEEEEEEEE!

WAM!

...LOTSA BUGS OUT TONIGHT, AINT THEY, TOM BOB?

SURE ARE, J.T.! SURE ARE...!

BEER

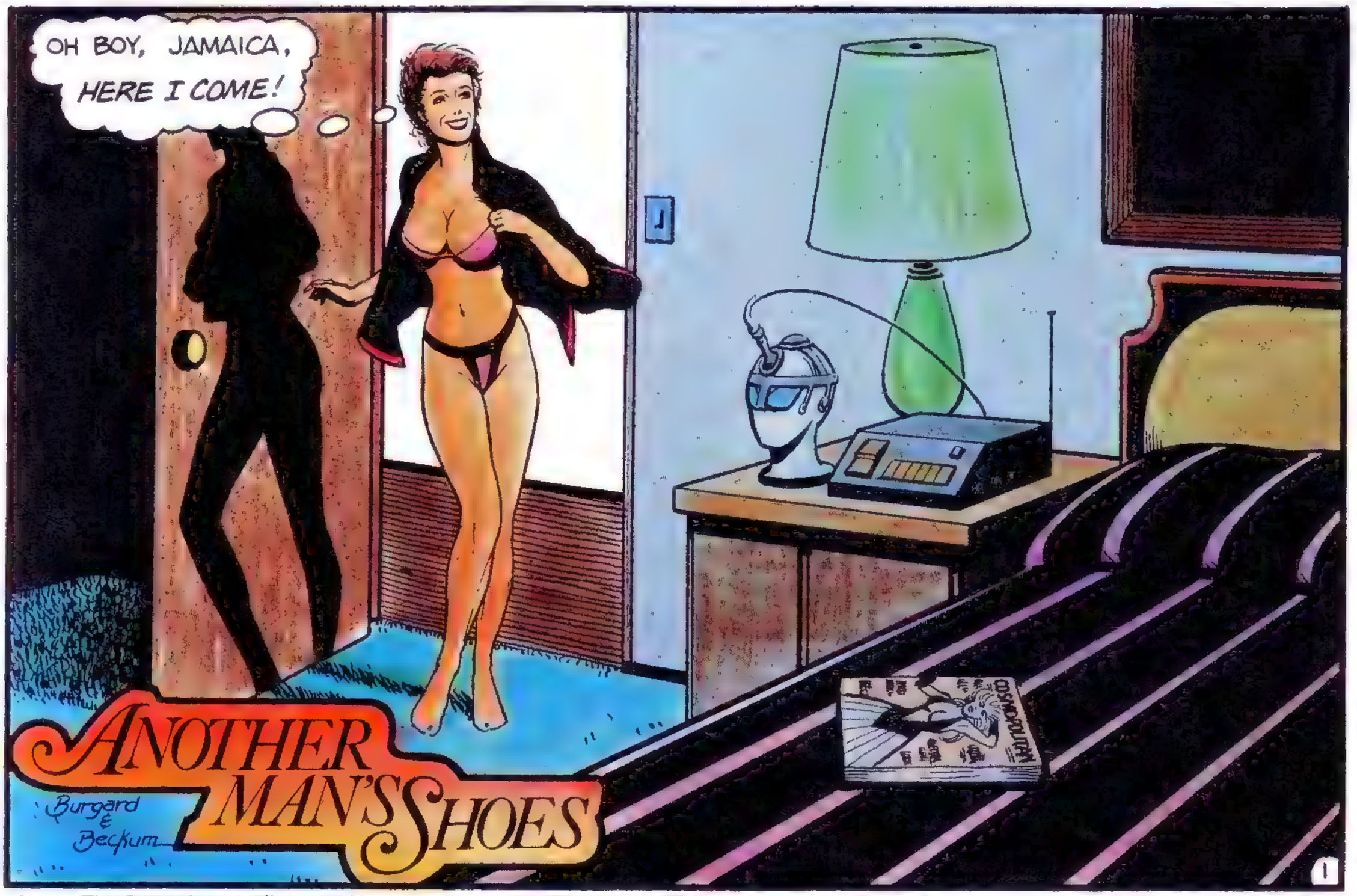
ENDSVILLE, MAN

AT THREE O'CLOCK TODAY THE OFFICE TOOK IT'S TOLL. WENDY ANDERSON'S BODY HAS BEEN ON AUTOMATIC PILOT SINCE THEN.

IT'S BEEN A ROUGH DAY, AND THE SIGHT OF AN INCIPIENT BLOCK PARTY FORMING IN FRONT OF HER APARTMENT BUILDING DOESN'T DO MUCH FOR HER STATE OF MIND.

YOU KNOW I WON'T CALL THE COPS ABOUT THE NOISE, FREDDY. BUT THE *NEIGHBORS*...
THEY'RE ALL HERE! LOOSEN UP, WEN, JOIN THE FUN.
THANKS, BUT I'M A LITTLE TOO... TIRED. MAYBE NEXT TIME.

HER EXHAUSTION GIVES WAY TO A HEADACHE AS SOUNDS FROM THE PARTY CONTINUE TO THUD THROUGH HER WALLS, AND WENDY KNOWS THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO LEAVE THE FATIGUE, THE PAIN AND NOISE BEHIND.




Story: Tim Burgard  Art/Letters: Chuck Beckum  Colors: Steve Oliff

AT LUNCH WENDY WAS SHANGHEID BY HER ROOMMATE, JULIE, TO A LITTLE SECOND-HAND STORE WHERE JULIE HAD EARLIER DISCOVERED THE F.S. 300 HOME ENTERTAINMENT COMPUTER.

IT WAS USED, BUT STILL TOO EXPENSIVE FOR JULIE TO BUY, SO SHE THREW IN A MONTH OF DOING ALL THE HOUSEWORK IF WENDY WOULD GO IN ON IT TOO. A REAL BARGAIN.

STILL, WENDY ALMOST BACKED OUT OF THE DEAL WHEN SHE HEARD WHY THE MACHINE CAME SO CHEAP. APPARENTLY THE FIRST OWNER BECAME ADDICTED TO IT AND SPENT ALL HIS TIME PLUGGED IN. SOMETHING LIKE ALCOHOLISM, THE DEALER SAID. THE GUY LOST HIS JOB, HIS FAMILY, AND FINALLY, WAS COMMITED TO AN ASYLUM.

A BAD SCENE.

BUT STILL, AN *F.S.300*... IT WAS STATE-OF-THE-ART... AND WENDY WANTED ENTERTAINMENT AS MUCH AS JULIE DID.

AFTER ALL, *EVERYBODY* NEEDS TO RELAX AFTER A DAY AT THE OFFICE.

*Ahhh*... NO NOISE. NO PRESSURE. JUST...

AVAST YE *BILGE RATS* THAR BE THE *CAP'N!*

WHA...?

TH' SPOILS BE READY FOR YUR INSPECTION, CAPN' FLINT, SUR!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

WELL! HERE COMES OUR PRIZE PEARL NOW.

WHEN MY FATHER, THE VICEROY CATCHES YOU, HE'LL ...HE'LL...

FEISTY LITTLE BIT, EH CAPT--

AAAARGH!

Y'SLATTERN! I'LL CARVE YUR...

Ooooh!

Oh my God!

MY LORD CAPTAIN! PROTECT ME AND I AM YOURS TO TAKE.

TAKE ME!

NOOO!

NOOOoo

THE CAVE IS WARM AND WET. HER FURS STINK OF OLD SWEAT. WENDY IS SURPRISED SHE CAN SENSE THESE THINGS. THE *FS300* IS CERTAINLY A TOP-OF-THE-LINE MACHINE.

GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF! *THINK* THIS THROUGH!

THIS MUST BE SOME OF THE MACHINE'S OLD PROGRAMMING. WHEN THAT GIRL TRIED TO ...

... I MUST HAVE MENTALLY "FAST FORWARDED" THE MACHINE.

THE SECOND SHOW'S ABOUT TO BEGIN. I BETTER USE THE CODE SIGNAL AND TURN THE MACHINE OFF.

SSSSS

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME!

SSSS

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME!

MY GOD! IM *TRAPPED!*

SSSS

W-WHY AM I STILL HERE? I- oh no! THE *FIRST OWNER!*

SKEEE!

THE *BASTARD!* HE STAYED IN HERE MAKING WET DREAMS UNTIL THE DAMN MACHINE REACHED ITS STORAGE LIMIT.

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? IF THE COMPUTER'S MEMORY IS *FULL*, THEN *MY* RETURN CODE WASN'T ACCEPTED. THE ORIGINAL CODE MUST STILL BE GOOD, BUT THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS IT IS IN A RUBBER ROOM.

YOU WERE MAGNIFICENT, O MAN! LET MY SISTER AND I THANK YOU *PROPERLY!*

*LET GO OF ME!*

SUDDENLY SO... TIRED...

THE SUN IS WARM OVERHEAD. FROM SOMEWHERE NEAR COMES THE CLINKING OF SPURS.

IT WAS HARDER TO MOVE AHEAD THAT TIME. I CAN FEEL PARTS OF THAT LUNATIC IN HERE WITH ME TRYING TO MAKE ME PLAY THE GAME. IF I DON'T GET OUT OF HERE SOON, I'LL BE TOO TIRED TO RESIST.

SAY YER PRAYERS, SHERRIFF!

GOOD. IT'S JUST A STRAIGHT FORWARD GUNFIGHT WITH NO ASSAULT ON MY GENDER. AT LEAST..,

YOO HOO! SHERRIFF!

DRILL THE DIRTY SNAKE, SHERRIFF!

SALOON AND GAMBLING

SUNDAYS CHURCH SERVICES 6AM

IF YOUR *PARTS* ARE STILL ATTACHED AFTERWARD, MY GIRLS'LL SHOW YOU A REAL GOOD TIME.

A *REAL* GOOD TIME.

DRAW!

NO!

BAM!

BAM

IMAGES.

SENSATIONS.

DROWNING.

GRASPING FOR PIECES OF IDENTITY AND HAVING THEM SNATCHED AWAY.

NO MORE STRENGTH.

ON THE PLANET BRONTHAL, PART OF WENDY ANDERSON FINDS THE STRENGTH TO CRY.

AGAIN SHE SEES HER FIRST MATE BEING CHASED BY THE SLOBBERING ALIEN.

ONCE MORE SHE MECHANICALLY AIMS HER RAYGUN AT THE SPACE-CREATURE

AND THE PROGRAMMING GOES ON.

*WENDY!* WAKE UP! I'VE GOT SOME INCREDIBLE NEWS!

WHAT'S THAT SMELL?

WENDY?

SOMETHING MUST HAVE BURNED IN THE KITCHEN. WHERE'S WENDY.

CHECK IT OUT WHILE I MAKE THE VEGAS RESERVATIONS.

OH *THERE* YOU ARE.

BREAD

YOU WON'T *BELIEVE* THE NIGHT I HAD! MY MIND GOT STUCK IN THAT DAMN *MACHINE* WE BOUGHT.

MMM, THAT'S GOOD.

ANYWAY, I'D *STILL* BE STUCK IN THERE IF THE BAND AT FREDDIE'S PARTY HADN'T BLOWN OUT ALL THE FUSES IN THE BUILDING.

WELL I'VE GOT NEWS TOO!

LAST NIGHT RICK AND I STARTED OUR HONEYMOON EARLY. ***WE'RE GETTING MARRIED!***

OH, THAT'S *WONDERFUL!*

JULIE, I GOT US A ROOM AT THE...

SHHK!

THE SCUM BE FISH-BAIT, ME TREASURE.

NOW YE BELONGS TO ME!

# LOG OF A SPACE TRAVELLER

17TH JULY 7.00 PM

TWENTY HOURS AGO I LOCKED INTO ORBIT AROUND A PLANET CALLED PARIS, WHICH ISN'T NAMED AFTER THE FRENCH CAPITAL BUT HONOURS A HERO OF THE TROJAN WARS— THE ONE WHO DISCOVERED THAT ACHILLES WASN'T SO PERFECT AFTER ALL.

THE SMALL AMOUNT OF DATA I HAD ON THE NATURE OF THE PLANET SHOWED ME THAT LARGE TRACTS OF IT WERE SUITABLE FOR HUMAN HABITATION. I WAS HOPING I WOULD FIND A HUMAN COMMUNITY DOWN THERE, THOUGH I HAD NO RECORDS OF AN OFFICIAL COLONIZATION HAVING TAKEN PLACE.

I TOOK OUT THE LAUNCH THAT NEEDED A HEAT SHIELD RENEWAL. I DON'T KNOW WHY— MAYBE I'M DEVELOPING A DEATH-WISH OR SOMETHING...

ANYWAY, IT HELD OUT. I MADE A MENTAL NOTE TO DISCIPLINE MYSELF MORE IN THE FUTURE.

WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY DAVID LLOYD • LETTERING: STEVE CRADDOCK • COLOURING: CHRIS MILLER

# the soft airs of thine own land

THE SLOWED INFRA-RED SHOWED SOME-THING INTERESTING...

NOT EXACTLY THE LIGHTS OF CIVILISATION, BUT INTERESTING.

THE JUNGLE WAS A SOLID MASS OF VEGETATION. I USED THE BEAM CUTTER ON IT SO I'D HAVE A TRAIL TO FOLLOW BACK TO THE LAUNCH.

AND IT WAS SOAKING WET. I KEPT MY HELMET ON AND THE VISOR DOWN, EVEN THOUGH THE AIR WAS PERFECTLY BREATH-ABLE. WELL, MAYBE NOT **PERFECTLY** — BUT IT WAS GOOD ENOUGH ACCORDING TO TEST READINGS.

IT WASN'T A PLEASANT TRIP, AND I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK I WAS CRAZY FOR INVESTIGATING WHAT WAS PROBABLY JUST SOME NATIVE VILLAGE.

I THOUGHT I HAD GONE MAD WHEN I HEARD THE SING-ING. I LIFTED THE VISOR TO MAKE SURE IT WAS COMING FROM OUTSIDE MY SKULL ... THEN I SAW THE FIRELIGHT THROUGH THE UNDERGROWTH...

OH DANNY BOY, THE PIPES, THE PIPES ARE CAAAAALLLLING...

FROM GLEN TO GLEN, AND DOWN THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE....

'TIS I'LL BE THERE, IN SUNSHINE OR IN SHADOW...

DEAR GOD...

HE SANG 'DANNY BOY' SIX MORE TIMES BEFORE THEY LET HIM FINISH.

THANK YOU, MUSIC LOVERS. SORRY— CAN'T STOP FOR AUTOGRAPHS.

ALL RIGHT, YOU LITTLE BASTARDS, TAKE IT EASY! =COUGH=

WELL, I'VE HEARD SOME BAD SINGING IN MY TIME, BUT HE WAS ABOUT THE WORST. IT WAS AN IRONIC ENCOUNTER, CONSIDERING I'D BROUGHT A VERDI TAPE OUT WITH ME FOR COMPANY... BUT I WASN'T THERE AS A TALENT SCOUT.

I WAITED UNTIL THE VILLAGE WAS ASLEEP — OR AS ASLEEP AS IT WAS LIKELY TO GET...

WHAT— ?

SHHH!

YOU CAN TELL ME HOW YOU GOT HERE LATER, BUT I THINK WE SHOULD LEAVE NOW.

AMEN TO THAT! ≡COUGH≡

WHAT'S THE NAME, MISTER?

CHRISTOPHER JAMES. WHAT'S YOURS?

DON'T YOU KNOW?

SHOULD I?

YOU'RE NOT FROM RESCUE GROUP?

≡COUGH≡ I **THOUGHT** IT WAS TAKING TOO LONG FOR THEM TO COME. HOW DID YOU—

NO.

WHAT'S **THAT**?

A RED LIGHT— WE HAVE TO STOP FOR A WHILE. THAT'S THE HUNTING CRY OF THE **RANGI**... PRETTY SPOOKY WHEN YOU HEAR IT FOR THE FIRST TIME, EH?

THEY HUNT IN PACKS. ONE SCARES THE PREY INTO RUNNING, THE OTHERS MOVE IN FROM THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION TO CATCH IT... WE'LL KNOW WHEN THEY CATCH SOMETHING — ≡COUGH≡ THEY'RE NOISY EATERS.

THAT'S WHEN WE CAN MAKE A MOVE... HOW FAR IS YOUR LAUNCH?

ABOUT TEN MINUTES AWAY IF WE CAN STAY ON THE BEAM PATH I CUT.

SO HOW DID YOU GET IN THIS MESS, ER...

KENNEDY, PAT KENNEDY... SHIPWRECK. THE WARNING SENSORS BROKE DOWN AND WE CAUGHT A METEOR SHOWER. WE HAD TO ABANDON SHIP.

ONLY CHUCK MILSON AND ME GOT HERE — BUT THE RANGI GOT MILSON. I —

ROWR! GRARGH! GRRR!

THAT'S IT, THEY'VE CAUGHT THEIR DINNER. ≡COUGH≡ LET'S GO BEFORE THEY LOOK FOR A SECOND COURSE.

THAT'S A NASTY COUGH YOU'VE GOT THERE.

IT'S A FUNGUS. A PARASITE. LIVES IN THE LUNGS. I FORGET WHAT IT'S CALLED NOW. ≡COUGH≡

IT JUST COMES TO STAY IF YOU'RE HERE A MONTH WITHOUT AN AIR FILTER. SPACEX IS TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO BEAT IT SO WE CAN COLONIZE WITHOUT WALKING AROUND IN MASKS ALL THE TIME.

HOW IS OLD MOTHER EARTH, BY THE WAY?

HOLD IT. SHHH.

WHAT IS IT?

UP AHEAD, THERE ARE SOME NATIVES GUARDING THE HEAD OF THE PATH. WE'LL HAVE TO CUT ANOTHER PATH OUT AROUND THEM.

OHH, NO...

WELL, ≡COUGH≡ THAT BRINGS BACK BAD MEMORIES...

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE?

WELL—

"I WAS FIXING THE MAYDAY BEACON OF THE LAUNCH, SINGING TO MYSELF. *DANNY BOY'S* THE ONLY DITTY I KNOW ALL THE WORDS TO... THEN I GOT THE FEELING I WAS BEING **WATCHED**..."

OH, DANNY BOY...

"IT TOOK ME A WHILE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THEY WERE SO EXCITED ABOUT. I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST A NATURAL DESIRE TO PUT ME IN THEIR COOK POT – BUT IT WAS MORE EXOTIC THAN THAT... THEY LIKED MY **SINGING**. IN FACT, THEY **LOVED** IT."

"I BECAME A **MAJOR ATTRACTION**... THEY INVITED NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES TO HEAR ME... I WAS SCARED MY VOICE WOULD GIVE UP – ESPECIALLY WITH THIS PARASITE THING I'VE GOT. BUT SOMEHOW IT DIDN'T — EVEN THE COUGH LEFT ME ALONE WHILE I WAS SINGING."

"AND THE ONLY SONG I KNOW IS *DANNY BOY*, AND THEY KEPT ON WANTING TO HEAR IT."

"THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT I WAS AND A BLOODY BUDGERIGAR WAS THAT THEY DIDN'T KEEP ME LOCKED UP IN A CAGE..."

"WE DIDN'T KNOW A LOT ABOUT PARIS. IT WAS ONE OF THOSE NEW DISCOVERIES – STILL WAITING FOR FULL EXPLORATION TEAMS TO BE ASSIGNED TO THEM. PARISIANS WERE STILL AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY."

"THEY KEPT ME FED, LOCKED ME UP IN THAT HUT, AND LET ME OUT EVERY NIGHT TO ENTERTAIN THEM AROUND THE CAMPFIRE."

"I THOUGHT THEY'D GET TIRED OF ME EVENTUALLY, BUT THEY DIDN'T... IN FACT, THE OPPOSITE HAPPENED..."

LISTEN, JAMES, ≡*COUGH*≡ IS THAT BEAM CUTTER ADJUSTABLE? THEY'RE NOT GOING TO GO AWAY AND WE CAN'T SIT HERE ALL NIGHT, NOW CAN WE?

EVEN IF IT **WAS** ADJUSTABLE – WHICH IT ISN'T – I WOULDN'T USE IT AS A WEAPON, KENNEDY. I DON'T BELIEVE IN MURDER UNLESS THERE'S NO ALTERNATIVE – AND EVEN THEN I'M NOT CONVINCED.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? ASK THE LITTLE BASTARDS NICELY IF WE CAN GO?

NO.

WAIT HERE.

HE DIDN'T LIKE ME LEAVING HIM WITHOUT EXPLANATION. I GOT THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION HE THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO RUN OUT ON HIM OR SOMETHING. HE WAS RELIEVED WHEN I GOT BACK.

WHAT DID YOU DO? =COUGH=

WAIT AND SEE.

CELESTE AÏDA...

FORMA DIVINA...

MISTICO SERTO DI LUCE E FIOR

GLORY BE.

DEL MIO PENSIERO TU SEI REGINA, TU DI MIA VITA SEI LO SPLENDOR.

IL TUO BEL CIELO VORREI RIDARTI, LE DOLCI...

SPACEMAN

BREZZE DEL PATRIO SUOL; UN REGAL SERTO SUL CRIN POSARTI...

ERGERTI UN TRONO VICINO AL SOL! AH!..

...MISTICO RAGGIO DI LUCE E FIOR!..

LORD, IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK IN A BOAT LIKE THIS AGAIN!

DID I THANK YOU FOR SAVING MY LIFE, CHRISTOPHER JAMES?

...IL TUO BEL CIELO VORREI RIDARTI, LE DOLCI BREZZE DEL PATRIO SUOL; UN REGAL SERTO SUL CRIN POSARTI,

ERGERTI UN TRONO VICINO AL SOL, UN TRONO VICINO AL SOL, UN TRONO VICINO AL SOL!

OH! ≥COUGH≤ G-GOD, I CAN'T —

WHAT IS IT!?

CAN'T... BREATHE... GAHHH...

WHY! WHAT'S HAPPENING?...

I QUICKLY PUT THE LAUNCH ON AUTO-PILOT — WE'D JUST REACHED SUFFICIENT ALTITUDE FOR ME TO DO THAT — AND I GAVE HIM OXYGEN... IT WAS THE WORST THING I COULD HAVE DONE...

BUT THEN EVEN THE **BEST** THING I COULD HAVE DONE AT THE TIME WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANY GOOD TO HIM.

WHEN I GOT HIM IN THE MEDIC ROOM ON THE SHIP AND RAN THE AUTO-DOC OVER HIS BODY, IT SHOWED ME WHAT HAD KILLED HIM. I HAVEN'T HAD ANY REAL MEDICAL TRAINING SO IT TOOK ME A WHILE TO UNDERSTAND.

IT WAS THE PARASITE. IT NEEDED SOMETHING IN THE AIR OF PARIS TO SURVIVE, AS WELL AS THE WARM COMPARTMENTS OF KENNEDY'S LUNGS.

WHEN IT COULDN'T GET IT ANY MORE, IT DIED. AND WHEN IT DIED, IT **CONTRACTED**, AND KENNEDY'S LUNGS CONTRACTED WITH IT — FOLDING CLOSED LIKE A PAIR OF EMPTY BELLOWS...

AS I'VE SAID, I COULDN'T HAVE DONE ANYTHING FOR HIM ON THE LAUNCH BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW WHY HE WAS DYING. BUT I STILL HAVE A TERRIBLE FEELING OF GUILT...

AIRLOCK 3

JUST BEFORE HE STARTED GASPING FOR BREATH, FOR ONE FLEETING MOMENT, AND WITHOUT MUCH HUMOUR, I THOUGHT TO MYSELF, "IS HE WORTH THE LOSS OF THE ONLY VERDI TAPE I HAD?"

=END=

TARTUKA STOOD AS IT HAD ALWAYS STOOD, HIGH, IMPASSIVE, BLACK AND UNHEEDING,,,

IT HAD STOOD THAT WAY FOR A MILLION CENTURIES AND MIGHT STAND FOR A MILLION MORE.

# UNDER TARTUKA

UNDER ITS CRAGGY, EBON PEAKS IT HAD WITNESSED THE CRIMSON TURMOIL OF *FOUR THOUSAND* SEPARATE CONFLICTS, FOUGHT OVER A SCORE OF WAR-WEARY GENERATIONS.

SOMETIMES THE DUST AND SMOKE AND GREEN PALL OF RADIATION ROSE SO HIGH IT THREATENED TO ECLIPSE EVEN THE LOFTY SUMMITS OF TARTUKA'S HIGHEST REACHES.

YET, STILL, AFTER SO MANY UNVICTORIOUS YEARS, THE BATTLES RAGED ON.

STILL THEY RAGED ON,,,

C'MON, C'MON!... BRING UP THOSE SUPPLIES, CORPORAL!

WE GOTTA GET UNDER COVER BEFORE NIGHTFALL. YA WANNA GET US *KILLED!?*

I'M :(GASP): ,,,I'M COMING, FRANK!

I'M COMING AS :(GASP): FAST AS I CAN!

PRETTY FAIR ROCK COVERAGE... GET A FIRE STARTED AND I'LL TRY TO TRACE OUR LOCATION.

-CAN'T :(GASP): -- CAN'T GO ANY FARTHER, FRANK! *HELP ME, PLEASE!*

ALL RIGHT,,, OKAY, THIS PLACE IS AS GOOD AS ANY TO MAKE CAMP.

,,,YES :(GASP): JUST LET ME GET MY :(GASP): BREATH,,,

HUNGRY,,, STARVING.

Script: Bruce Jones  Art Bo Hampton  Lettering Tracy Hampton

WE HAVE TO CONSERVE FOOD! BLAST THIS HAND COMPASS,,,

WHAT WE NEED IS A FIELD SPECTOMETER SO WE COULD SEE THE ENTIRE AREA,,,

HEY, OFF YOUR BUTT, CORPORAL! MOVE!!

YA WANNA DIE OUT HERE IN THE DARK?

,,,NO, FRANK,,, I-I'M MOVING ,,,SEE, I'M DOING IT,,,

FRANK! EEEEE!!!

DUCK! BUG-BOMB!

GOT IT!!

IF YOU'D HAD THE BLASTED FIRE GOING WE COULDA SEEN IT COMIN' EARLIER! WORTHLESS DAMN FEMALE SOLDIERS!

I-I'M SORRY, FRANK-- IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN!

LOOK AT HER, CORPORAL-- OLD TARTUKA! WHAT A SIGHT!

SOMEDAY I'LL HAVE A HOUSE UP THERE, JENNY, WITH A VIEW OF THE MOUNTAINS AND A BRAND NEW PORSCHE G-74 IN THE GARAGE!

SOMEDAY WHEN THIS CRUMMY WAR IS OVER!,,,

YESSIR,,, A MOUNTAIN VIEW AND A BRAND NEW CAR!

A-AND A WIFE, FRANK? AND A CHILD PERHAPS?,,,

HUH? OH, YEAH ...A WIFE MAYBE, TOO... I AIN'T SO SURE ABOUT A CHILD,,, I AIN'T GOT TIME IN MY LIFE FOR KIDS ...TOO MUCH WORRY...

IF THOSE BASTARD GEMLINS WOULD EVER GIVE UP AND GO HOME, I COULD HAVE THAT HOUSE RIGHT NOW!

THEY KNOW THEY'RE BEATEN, WHY DON'T THEY JUST LEAVE?

THEY'VE FOUGHT AS LONG AS WE HAVE ,,, FOR CENTURIES ...

MAYBE THEY FEEL THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO OUR PLANET BY NOW,,,

WHAT THE HELL'S THE *MATTER* WITH YOU? YOU SOUND LIKE A DAMN *TRAITOR!* *WE* WERE ON EARTH FIRST! *THEY* STARTED THE WAR!

YOU WANT YER KIDS GOIN' TO SCHOOL WITH THOSE DAMN *LIZARDS?* YOU WANT EARTH PEOPLE *BREEDIN'* WITH THEM HORRORS?

UH!

NEVER *MIND* WHAT YOU MEANT! BE STILL WHILE I SEE IF I CAN RAISE *C*-COMPANY ON THIS THING...

NO... (SOB)... NO, FRANK, I ONLY MEANT--

*C*-COMPANY G4-XL4, THIS IS A-COMPANY 47RN9! DO YOU COPY?

THERE'S ONLY TWO OF US *LEFT!* REST OF PLATOON WIPED OUT IN BUG-BOMB ATTACK--

--DO YOU COPY!?

THERE HE GOES! JENNY, GET *DOWN!!*

GOT 'IM! YA-HOO!

ZZRACK!!

SPARROWW!!

FUNNY... THE RELIEF PLATOON SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE DAYS AGO! WHERE THE HELL ARE THEY?

MAYBE THEY---

FRANK!!

A...A *FEMALE!*

SHE'S *HURT!* GET THE FIRST AID KIT!...

DAMN GEMLINS! I OUGHTA *ZAP* HER AGAIN...

NO, FRANK, THE *GENEVA CODE!*

THE *HELL* WITH THE CODE, WE SHOULD--

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! THIS IS OUR BIG *CHANCE!*

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HER, SHE'S BLEEDING!?

JUST EXTRACTING SOME OF THAT NICE GREEN BLOOD, JENNY BABY!

AND AFTER THAT I'M GONNA MIX IT WITH THE R-29 FACTOR!

FRANK, NO!

WE GOT US A LIVE SPECIMEN AT LAST, CORPORAL, AND WE'RE GONNA USE HER TO SEE WHAT'S GOIN' ON ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LINES!

FRANK, IT'S ONLY A THEORY! NOBODY'S EVER REALLY USED THE R-FACTOR BEFORE.

FRANK,,, I'M SCARED!

I SEEN IT DONE ONCE AT PRINCETON TEN YEARS AGO! IT WORKS ALL RIGHT! AND WE'LL BE THE FIRST TO USE IT IN COMBAT!

FRANK, PLEASE! IT'S PAINFUL! I'VE HEARD IT'S VERY PAINFUL!

WE'LL BE FAMOUS, JENNY GIRL!

FRANK, DON'T,,, I'M EXHAUSTED ,,, I NEED FOOD!

MINUTES LATER,,,

HERE'S HER LASER PISTOL! TAKE THE NORTH QUADRANT BACK THE SAME WAY SHE CAME, YOU SHOULD FIND THE ENEMY CAMP!

FRANK, NO!

I'LL COVER YOU FROM HERE WITH THE RIFLE IF YOU NEED IT! DON'T SWEAT THE LANGUAGE: WHEN THE DRUG TAKES EFFECT YOU'LL SPEAK PERFECT GEMLINA!

KEEP LOW UNTIL YOU START TO CHANGE! GET GOIN'!! MOVE, CORPORAL! NOW!!

FIND OUT ALL YOU CAN ABOUT TROOP MOVEMENTS IN THE AREA! TRY TO GET BACK LATER TONIGHT IF YOU CAN!...

DON'T WORRY, I'VE GOT THE ANTIDOTE RIGHT HERE!

OH, GOD, FRANK ,,, I'M SO SCARED!

CAN'T SEE A THING IN THIS SMOKE! AM I OVER THE ENEMY LINES?

WILL THEY REALLY BELIEVE I'M A GEMLIN?

WHEN WILL THE DRUG TAKE EFFECT? WILL IT BE PAINFUL?

AAAGGHH!! OH, GOD! IT'S STARTING!

THE PAIN!

DEAR GOD THE PAIN!

WHO GOES THERE! NAME AND RANK, SOLDIER!

OH, GOD, ULMA! IS THAT YOU?

ULMA, DARLING! I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!

MPH!

... I BEGGED YOU NOT TO GO SCOUTING ALONE BUT YOU'RE ALL RIGHT AT LEAST!

I HAVE BAD NEWS, DARLING, THE OTHERS ARE ALL DEAD!...

WE'RE THE LAST, ULMA... THE VERY LAST!

SIT DOWN, DARLING, AND REST. I'LL FIX YOU SOMETHING TO EAT, I SAVED MY RATIONS, THE LAST OF THEM, I'M AFRAID...

MORE BAD NEWS, I FIXED THE RADIO --ULMA, I CAN'T RAISE ANYONE NOT A LIVING SOUL!

DO YOU SEE WHAT THAT MEANS, DARLING? THE PLANET IS DEAD! EMPTY!

EMPTY?

ULMA, THE WAR IS OVER! OUR PLANET IS SO BOMBED OUT THE INVADERS DIDN'T WANT IT ANYMORE!

THEY'VE ALL GONE BACK TO EARTH. I PICKED UP THEIR VANISHING ROCKET SIGNALS!

I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND-- THIS... THIS IS EARTH!...ISN'T IT?

WHAT?? POOR DARLING, YOU'RE DELIRIOUS!

THIS IS ALTAIRA, DEAREST. THE EARTHLINGS WERE THE AGRESSORS, REMEMBER?

...AND NOW, AFTER CENTURIES OF USELESS FIGHTING, IT'S OVER... AND NEITHER SIDE WON ANYTHING...

WE'RE ALL THAT'S LEFT OF THE *RACE*, ULMA, WE'RE ALL ALONE--EXCEPT FOR THAT SMALL ENEMY PLATOON ACROSS THE RIDGE THAT GOT LEFT BEHIND WHEN THE ROCKETS TOOK OFF...

DID YOU GET A LOOK AT THEM, DARLING?

...NO...I... LHAN, ARE YOU *SURE* THE WAR IS OVER?

...ARE YOU *POSITIVE*?

I'M SURE. THE RADIO DOESN'T LIE. BUT DON'T WORRY, SWEETHEART, *I'LL* TAKE CARE OF YOU! WE'LL STILL BUILD THAT LITTLE HOUSE YOU WANTED UP THERE ON *MT. TARTLIKA!* REMEMBER? THE ONE WITH THE LITTLE STONE PATH AND THE LITTLE WHITE FENCE...

...AND THE *NURSERY*?

THE NURSERY...?

IT MIGHT TAKE TIME, BUT WE'LL KEEP THE RACE GOING, I PROMISE YOU!...

WHY THE SAD FACE, DARLING? HAVE YOU FALLEN OUT OF LOVE WITH ME SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE?

HA-HA!

I-I'VE GOT TO *GO!* I'VE GOT TO GO BACK -- BACK TO THE ENEMY CAMP...

I-I LEFT SOMETHING THERE!

WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT DARLING? YOU CAN'T GO BACK THERE *NOW!*

BESIDES, I'LL *NEVER* LET YOU RISK YOUR *LIFE* LIKE THAT AGAIN. I WAS SO *WORRIED* ABOUT YOU! ULMA, YOU'RE MY WHOLE *LIFE*, DON'T YOU *KNOW* THAT?

--Y-YES, BUT WHAT IF--WHAT IF I WAS... *CHANGED* SOMEHOW... WHAT IF I WASN'T THE SAME ULMA YOU KNEW...ON THE *INSIDE*...I MEAN?

BUT YOU *ARE* THE SAME ON THE INSIDE, I CAN *SEE* IT IN YOUR *EYES!* AND YOUR EYES HAVE NEVER LIED TO ME, ULMA DEAR. YOU DO LOVE ME.

DON'T YOU, DARLING?

I... I...

LOOK OUT, LHAN!

ULMA!

ULMA! ULMA! WHERE *ARE* YOU? DARLING, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? *ULMA!*

JENNY? THAT YOU, CORPORAL?

IT'S ME...

DID YOU SEE THE ENEMY? HOW MANY WERE THERE?

THEY'VE ALL LEFT, FRANK, ALL GONE BACK TO EARTH. ALL BUT ONE. THE WAR IS OVER...

BACK TO EARTH? ARE YOU *NUTS?*

THEY LIED TO US, FRANK. *WE* WERE THE ATTACKERS. *WE* WERE THE ENEMY.

...OR MAYBE... MAYBE SO MANY CENTURIES PASSED, NOBODY REALLY CARED ANYMORE...

SOMEONE'S BEEN *LYING* ALL RIGHT!

IF THE WAR IS OVER THEN WHY ARE THE BUG BOMBS STILL ATTACKING?

I DON'T KNOW... MAYBE THE BUG BOMBS WORK AUTOMATICALLY, *INDEPENDENT* OF THEIR CREATORS...

*OH, GOD!* OH, GOD, SHE'S *DEAD!*

*YOU KILLED HER!! YOU MURDERED HER, YOU BASTARD!*

*WHY?*

SHE WAS OF NO USE TO US. SHE WAS OF NO USE TO *ANYONE!* I PUT HER OUT OF HER *MISERY!*

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?

*BURYING* HER, WHAT DOES IT *LOOK* LIKE I'M DOING?

...YEAH, GOOD IDEA, GET RID OF THE STINK. JUST BE *QUICK* ABOUT IT, I'D LIKE SOME *SUPPER!*

*WELL?* HOW *ABOUT* IT? I *SAID* I'D LIKE SOME *SUPPER* NOW! YOU GONNA GIVE IT TO ME OR NOT?

I'M GOING TO GIVE IT TO YOU, FRANK...

WHAT'S THIS?

HE LOVED HER, FRANK... NOT THAT YOU'D UNDER-STAND THAT WORD, BUT HE LOVED HER A LOT!

SHE WAS THE LAST OF HER RACE, THE ONLY THING WORTHWHILE IN HIS LIFE. AND YOU TOOK IT AWAY WITH THE SQUEEZE OF A FINGER...

...TAKE IT EASY, CORPORAL, MAKE SENSE!

I AM MAKING SENSE, FRANK... FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE EVERY-THING IS PERFECTLY CLEAR...

JENNY! BEHIND YOU! BUG BOMB!

SORRY, CORPORAL...

AGH!

...BUT YOU ASKED FOR IT. DOES IT HURT BAD?

I TRIED TO AIM HIGH, BUT YOU DIDN'T GIVE ME MUCH TIME.

MAYBE THE BEST THING WOULD BE IF I JUST FINISHED IT RIGHT HERE...

KOWWW!

WHO... ARE YOU?

YOU'RE NOT ULMA... ARE YOU?

LOOK (CHOKE!) ...LOOK INTO MY EYES, LHAN, ...LOOK DEEP! ULMA'S HERE... (CHOKE!)

...IF YOU WANT HER...

TARTUKA STANDS AS IT HAS FOR A MILLION CENTURIES... IT MIGHT STAND FOR A MILLION MORE. AT ITS BASE, TWO LONE GRAVE MARKERS SIL-HOUETTE THE SLOWLY CLEARING HAZE OF SMOKE AND DUST AND RADIOACTIVE DEATH...

...AND ABOVE, IN ITS LOFTY PEAKS, THE LITTLE STONE HOUSE SITS QUIETLY; SUN-LIGHT WARMING THE LITTLE STONE PATH AND THE WHITE PICKET FENCE AND THE NUR-SERY WINDOW...

WHA-A-A-A-A!

...AND THE NEW LIFE STARTING WITHIN...

THE END

# PICTURE ME AND YOU

EVER BEEN IN LOVE? DEEPLY IN LOVE? PROFOUNDLY IN LOVE? SO IN LOVE THAT YOU WOULDN'T HESITATE EVEN FOR THE SMALLEST PART OF AN INSTANT TO GIVE YOUR LIFE GLADLY FOR YOUR LOVED ONE? EVER BEEN THAT MUCH IN LOVE? NEITHER HAVE I.

NOT, AT LEAST, UNTIL GINA...

STORY: BRUCE JONES
ART: CHUCK BECKUM
LETTERER: WAYNE TRUMAN
COLORIST: RON COURTNEY

BUT I'M GETTING AHEAD OF MYSELF. LET ME START AT THE BEGINNING. THE BEGINNING... WHERE IS THE BEGINNING? HERE, ON THIS LONELY STRETCH OF BEACH? NO...THE SAND AND THE SURF COME LATER; WE HAVE TO GO FARTHER BACK. THE BEACH IS WHERE I ENDED UP, BUT THE REAL STORY HAS AN EARLIER INCEPTION...

I'M A PAINTER, AN ILLUSTRATOR. WELL, LET ME QUALIFY THAT: I'M AN ILLUSTRATOR NOW, I HOPE ANYWAY. BUT IN THE BEGINNING --HA!--IN THE BEGINNING I COULDN'T GET ARRESTED WITH MY PAINTINGS!

AS ANYONE IN THIS BUSINESS WILL TELL YOU, WHEN YOU'RE ESTABLISHED YOU'RE ESTABLISHED, AND WHEN YOU'RE JUST STARTING OUT...WELL...

...UH-HUH, NICE STUFF, YEAH. THE THING IS, THOUGH, WE AREN'T LOOKING FOR ANY NEW TALENT RIGHT AT THE MOMENT.

WELL, THANKS ANYWAY...

SCIENCE FICTION WAS MY PASSION. I'D LOVED IT SINCE I WAS A KID. KELLY FREAS, STANLEY MELTZOFF, ALEX SCHOMBURG, I KNEW ALL THE GREAT ARTISTS, EVEN IMITATED THEIR STYLES. TROUBLE WAS, THERE WERE MORE TITLES TO SELL TO IN THOSE DAYS...

...UH-HUH, NICE STUFF, YEAH. THE THING IS, THOUGH--

--YOU AREN'T LOOKING FOR ANY NEW TALENT RIGHT AT THE MOMENT.

WELL, PEOPLE WARNED ME; MY PARENTS, MY FRIENDS. THIS ISN'T THE 40'S, THEY SAID. THIS ISN'T EXACTLY THE GOLDEN AGE OF ILLUSTRATION. KNOW SOMETHING? THEY WERE RIGHT...

EVERYONE HAD ADVICE. GET INTO SOMETHING LUCRATIVE, THEY SAID, SOMETHING WITH A FUTURE. BUT I'M A PAINTER! I EXPLAINED. THEY LAUGHED. ALL EXCEPT MR. CARBONI, MY LANDLORD. HE DIDN'T LAUGH...

3C

WHAT'S THIS?

WHAT'S **THIS**? THIS IS EVERYTHING YOU OWN IN THE WORLD, MR. NELSON, ALL NEATLY PACKED AND READY FOR YOU TO TAKE AWAY. YOU GOT EVERYTHING IN THESE SUITCASES BUT MONEY. THAT I COULDN'T FIND NOWHERE.

YOU'RE THROWING ME OUT...

4G

YOU'RE A BRIGHT KID. BROKE, BUT BRIGHT. TWO MONTHS RENT YOU OWE ME. BUT AM I KEEPING YOUR VALUABLES LIKE SOME LANDLORDS WOULD UNTIL YOU PAY UP? NO. NOT ME. BECAUSE I'M A NICE GUY? YES. ALSO BECAUSE, MR. PETE NELSON, YOU AIN'T **GOT** NOTHIN' VALUABLE!

TAKE MY ADVICE, MR. PETE NELSON, GIVE UP THIS PAINTING THING. GET INTO SOMETHING MORE LUCRATIVE--

--SOMETHING WITH A FUTURE. ADVICE I'VE GOT, MR. CARBONI, WHAT I NEED IS A JOB!

THAT'S ME ON THE CORNER THERE. IT FINALLY CAME TO THIS, PAWNING MY STUFF OFF ON PASSERSBY. I ACTUALLY SOLD ONE OR TWO PIECES LIKE THIS... FOR ABOUT ONE-TENTH WHAT THEY WERE WORTH. THIS OPERATION HAD ITS DRAWBACKS, HOWEVER...

YOU GOT A LICENSE TO SELL THIS STUFF?

OFFICER, I HAVEN'T GOT THE DOUGH FOR A DOG LICENSE!

I GOT MAD THEN. REAL ANGRY. I HID OUT IN CENTRAL PARK AND PAINTED MY TRIBUTE TO NEW YORK'S FINEST. EVERY BRUSH STROKE WAS A SLASH OF HATRED, A GETTING BACK FOR MONTHS OF HUMILIATION AND PENT-UP FRUSTRATION...

...DIRTY BASTARDS!

I LIKE IT...

IT'S GOT POWER, FEAR! BUT MOST OF ALL IT'S GOT AN OTHER-WORLDLY KIND OF *REALISM!*

I'M MATT BENSON. I'VE GOT A LITTLE INDEPENDENT COMPANY OVER ON WEST 43RD CALLED MAGNUM COMICS. ALL I CAN PAY YOU IS THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS, BUT--

SOLD!

I GUESS THAT'S WHERE IT *REALLY* BEGAN, WITH THE PUBLICATION OF THAT FIRST COMIC BOOK COVER, AND THAT FIRST MUCH-NEEDED CHECK...

HERE IT IS, PETE, HOT OFF THE PRESS! THE GUYS AROUND THE OFFICE LOVE IT, AND SO DO I!

THANKS, MATT! AND THANKS FOR THE CHECK!

SCIENCE HORROR TALES

GOOD NEWS, MATT! GORDY'S COMICS WORLD JUST ORDERED ANOTHER HUNDRED COPIES! THEY LOVE THE PETE NELSON COVER!

...HELLO...

GINA, MEET THE ARTIST IN THE FLESH. THIS IS PETE NELSON. PETE, GINA BENSON, MY COPY READER AND WIFE!

HELLO, PETE...I'M YOUR BIGGEST FAN...

I REITERATE: EVER BEEN IN LOVE? WITH ME IT HAPPENED JUST THAT FAST. WITH GINA TOO. AND MATT? MY PUBLISHER? MY SALVATION? MY TRUE LOVE'S HUSBAND? MATT WAS TOO BUSY RAVING ABOUT MY PAINTINGS TO NOTICE...

...IN THE BEGINNING AT LEAST.

LET'S JUST SAY OLD MATT WAS NOT ON TOP OF THE SITUATION. ME, I WAS ON TOP OF THE SITUATION EVERY CHANCE I COULD GET...THE SITUATION BEING GINA...

OH, PETE ...THIS IS SO WRONG...

I KNOW. SHALL I STOP?

DON'T YOU *DARE!*

PETE, DID YOU SEE THIS PHOTO ON THE COVER OF THIS MORNING'S TIMES?

WHAT IS IT?

# NY COP FOUND IN BIZARRE SLAYING

TOO BAD. SO WHAT?

I DON'T KNOW... IT'S JUST THAT, DOESN'T IT LOOK AN AWFUL LOT LIKE YOUR *PAINTING*?

A MIXUP IS MINED

THOSE PLOT-CONSCIOUS READERS WILL NOTICE A DEFINITE PATTERN EMERGING HERE. YES, IT *DID* LOOK AN AWFUL LOT LIKE THAT COP I PAINTED IN CENTRAL PARK. YES, I *DID* THINK ABOUT IT THE NEXT TIME I PICKED UP MY PAINT BRUSH, WHICH HAPPENED TO BE RIGHT AROUND ROCKEFELLER CENTER...

MATT LOVED THE PAINTING. EVERYBODY LOVED THE PAINTING. IT WAS A GOOD PAINTING! I PUSHED ALL OTHER THOUGHTS FROM MY MIND...ALL THOUGHTS BUT GINA...

GREAT! TERRIFIC! I WANT IT FOR MAGNUM!

I WANT YOU TO TELL HIM, PETE. THIS IS-NT FAIR TO HIM, THIS ISN'T FAIR TO ANYONE. WE CAN'T GO ON LIVING A LIE THIS WAY. I WANT YOU TO TELL HIM.

PETE? DID YOU HEAR ME?

I HEARD, I HEARD.

WELL?

SEE, IT'S LIKE THIS: I LOVE YOU, GINA, I DO! MORE THAN ANYTHING! BUT THE TRUTH IS, WITH-OUT MATT PAYING ME FOR COVERS EVERY MONTH, I'M PRETTY MUCH A PAUPER! HOW WOULD I SUP-PORT YOU?

I'M STILL HERE.

YOU'RE SOME-WHAT ESTABLISH-ED NOW. SHOW YOUR WORK A-ROUND.

IT'S NOT SO EASY, MATT'S THE ONLY GUY PUBLISHING SCI-FI COMICS--AND COMICS IS WHAT I'M KNOWN FOR.

I DUNNO...IT'S A TOUGH BUSINESS...

TELL HIM, PETE. TELL HIM OR THIS IS OVER. I'M TIRED OF NOT SLEEPING AT NIGHT, OF LYING, OF MAKING EXCUSES TO HIM WHEN HE WANTS ME.

IT'S ME OR THE CAREER, PETE. THE CHOICE IS YOURS...

NICE, HUH? TERRIFIC SITUATION! ONE MINUTE I'VE GOT EVERYTHING I EVER DREAMED OF, THE NEXT MINUTE THE BUBBLE BURSTS. OH, AND THAT'S NOT ALL; THERE WERE OTHER PROBLEMS...

EVENING, SAM. NIGHTLY PAPER IN YET?

RIGHT HERE.

NEW YORK TIMES

WOMAN BURNED TO DEATH IN AP-
PARENT SUICIDE

BUT *WE* KNOW IT WASN'T A SUICIDE, DON'T WE? *WE* KNOW IT WAS A HEAT RAY FROM A FLYING SAUCER FROM A #286 GRUMBACHER PAINT BRUSH!

ENOUGH WAS ENOUGH. IF I HADN'T ALREADY HAD SUFFICIENT IMPETUS TO TALK TO MATT, I DID NOW...

MATT WAS A MATURE GUY. A REASONABLE GUY. HE'D UNDERSTAND. GINA AND I HAD FALLEN IN LOVE, THAT'S ALL. IT COULD HAPPEN TO ANYONE. ANYONE. MATT WOULD UNDERSTAND...

YOU WHAT !!?

WITH *GINA*? WITH MY *WIFE*!!?

YOU WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT A LITTLE GUY LIKE THAT COULD PUNCH...

--AND STAY OUT, YOU MISERABLE BASTARD! I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE AROUND HERE AGAIN!

SALLY, GET MY WIFE ON THE PHONE!

MAGNUM

AND NOW FOR THE SAD PART. YES, IT GETS WORSE. I TOLD GINA ABOUT MY, AH--"CONVERSATION" WITH MATT. SHE THREW HER ARMS AROUND ME. KISSED ME. TOLD ME SHE LOVED ME. EVERYTHING WOULD BE FINE. IT WASN'T.

WE WENT SAILING...

IT WASN'T MY BOAT, IT BELONGED TO A FRIEND OF GINA'S. SORT OF A PRE-HONEYMOON JAUNT. TWO TURTLE DOVES ADRIFT ON A SEA OF LOVE. IT WAS ALL SO BEAUTIFUL AND SERENE, I EVEN QUIT WORRYING ABOUT HOW I WOULD SUPPORT US. THEN THE STORM HIT...

GINA WAS HELPING ME LOWER THE SAIL WHEN THE BIG WAVE STRUCK US...

EEEEE!

GINA!

GINA!

I CAN'T SWIM. NOT THAT IT WOULD HAVE HELPED MUCH IN THAT SEA. I WAS LUCKY TO GET BACK TO SHORE ALIVE...

GINA...OH GOD, GINA!...(SOB)..I'VE LOST EVERYTHING...

OF COURSE, COMPARED TO THE COP IN CENTRAL PARK AND THE WOMAN IN ROCKEFELLER CENTER, I WASNT DOING HALF BAD. AND THAT GAVE ME AN IDEA. MY PAINTINGS HAD ALWAYS BEEN A PORTENT OF DOOM.

WHAT IF IT WORKED THE OTHER WAY, TOO?...

I STAYED UP ALL NIGHT FINISHING THE PAINTING. IT HAD TO BE SCIENCE FICTION SO MATT WOULD BUY IT, BUT IT HAD TO BE GINA TOO...IT HAD TO BE GINA ALIVE AND BREATHING...

BUT IT'S THE ONLY WAY! DON'T YOU SEE, THE COP GOT EATEN BY THE SPIDER, THE WOMAN GOT BURNED BY THE SAUCER! ONLY FIRST YOU HAVE TO *PUBLISH* IT! THAT'S THE SECRET!

YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND COMING IN HERE, NELSON! FIRST YOU GET MY WIFE KILLED, THEN YOU BRING IN THIS HIDEOUS PORTRAIT OF HER WITH THIS...*THING* AND EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE SOME INSANE BLACK MAGIC STORY!

GET HIM OUT OF HERE! AND CALL THE POLICE! CALL MY ATTORNEY!

IT HAS TO BE ON *YOUR* COMIC BOOK COVER! THAT'S THE ONLY WAY IT WORKS! PLEASE, LISTEN TO ME!

I GUESS YOU COULD SAY I LOST IT RIGHT ABOUT THEN. I KNEW WITHOUT THE PUBLICATION OF THAT PAINTING GINA WAS GONE, AND I ALSO KNEW THAT MATT THOUGHT I WAS COMPLETELY UNHINGED. MAYBE I WAS. I WENT BACK TO MY STUDIO...

...GINA...

SO, I DID ANOTHER PAINTING. A PAINTING OF FEAR AND FRUSTRATION AND DEEP SEATED HATRED. HATRED OF MATT, OF MYSELF, OF THE WHOLE STINKING TOWN. I TOOK ALL THE POISON ROILING INSIDE MY GUTS AND POURED IT OUT THROUGH THAT PAINT BRUSH. THEN, I SLEPT...

AND AFTER I SLEPT I WENT FOR A WALK--A DRUNKEN WALK--EVERYWHERE, ANYWHERE, ALL OVER THE CITY, I HIT A LOT OF BARS. I WAS GONE FOR DAYS, MAYBE WEEKS. AND WHEN I STUMBLED BACK HOME, GUESS WHAT WAS WAITING IN MY MAILBOX?

A CHECK? FROM MAGNUM COMICS?

THIS IS PETE NELSON, IS MATT BENSON THERE?

BENSON QUIT A WEEK AGO. THIS IS PAUL WILSON, THE *NEW* EDITOR. WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO REACH YOU, NELSON. HOPE YOU DON'T MIND--WE DROPPED BY AND PICKED UP YOUR LATEST WORK. THE OCTOPUS-MAN COVER CAME OUT GREAT! IT'S ON THE STANDS NOW, HAVE YOU SEEN IT?

THAT'S WHEN THE KNOCK CAME ON MY DOOR...

GINA!!

..PPETE...?

YOU'RE ALIVE!! ALIVE!! I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT WOULD WORK!

...C-CAN'T SEEM TO REMEMBER... FLOATING, FLOATING... THEN STUMBLING UP THE BEACH...

HAPPY ENDING? NOT QUITE--THIS IS ONLY THE THIRD PANEL... ALL OF A SUDDEN, I REMEMBERED SOMETHING...

WILSON? YOU SAY YOU PICKED UP MY WORK--WHAT ABOUT THE *OTHER* PAINTING, YOU GET THAT ONE TOO?

OH YEAH! GREAT COVER! IT COMES OUT TOMORROW ON OUR NEW SF BOOK, SPACE MYSTERY.

J. KNEW THERE WASN'T TIME TO STOP IT, THE PRESSES WERE ALREADY ROLLING. ALL I COULD DO WAS GRAB GINA, PACK A QUICK BAG, AND HOP ON THE NEAREST PLANE...

WHICH BRINGS US TO HERE, THIS BEACH IN SANTA BARBARA. I ALWAYS LIKED THE IDEA OF LIVING IN CALIFORNIA. SO DID GINA...

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING: THE COP, THE WOMAN, EVEN GINA'S RESCUE, THEY COULD ALL BE EXPLAINED RATIONALLY: THE COP WAS MUGGED, THE WOMAN KILLED HERSELF LIKE THE PAPER SAID AND GINA...WELL, GINA JUST SOMEHOW SWAM ASHORE ON HER OWN HOOK...

I THOUGHT OF ALL THAT TOO. BUT JUST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE, I THOUGHT WE'D BETTER GET AS FAR AWAY FROM MANHATTAN AS POSSIBLE...

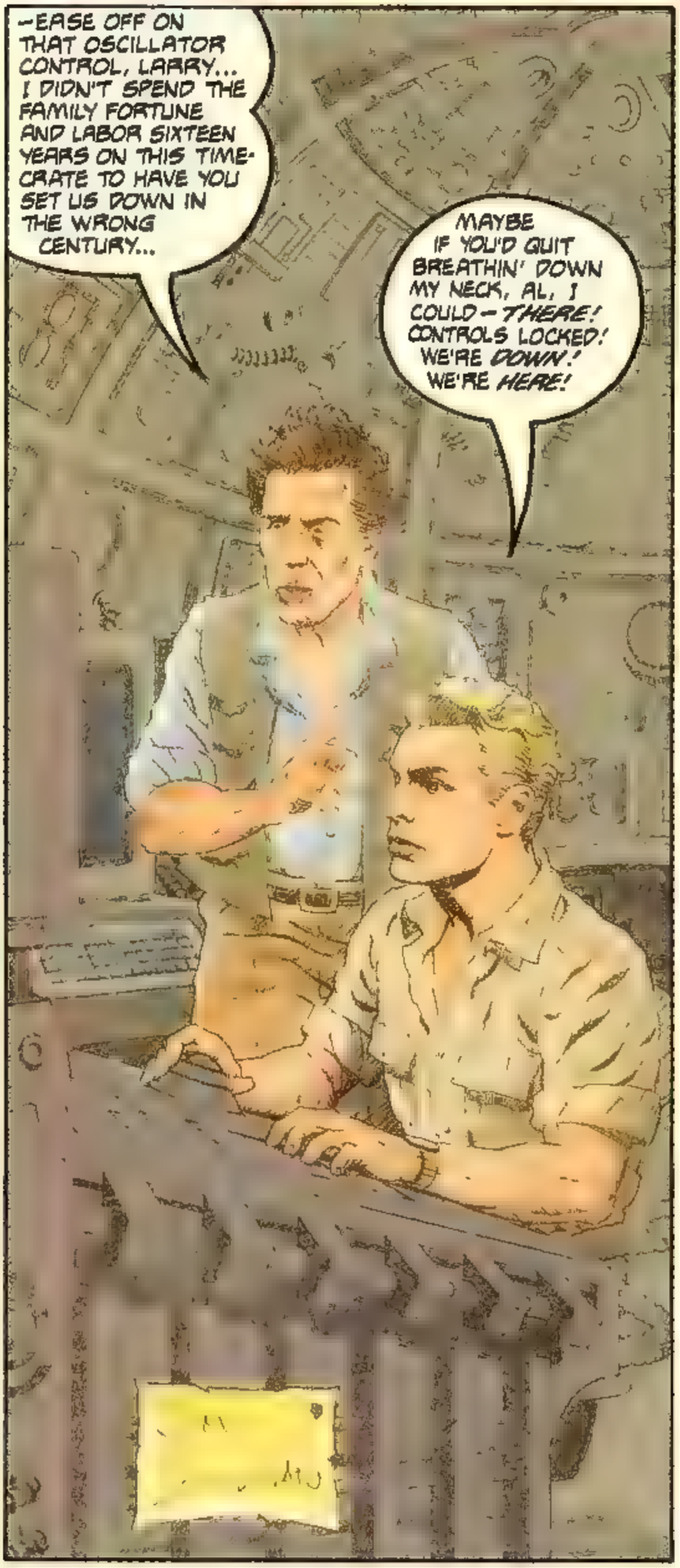
SPACE MYSTERY 1.50

...I MEAN, WHY TAKE CHANCES?

SPACE MYSTERY

END

# TAKE ONE CAPSULE EVERY MILLION YEARS


—EASE OFF ON THAT OSCILLATOR CONTROL, LARRY... I DIDN'T SPEND THE FAMILY FORTUNE AND LABOR SIXTEEN YEARS ON THIS TIME-CRATE TO HAVE YOU SET US DOWN IN THE WRONG CENTURY...
MAYBE IF YOU'D QUIT BREATHIN' DOWN MY NECK, AL, I COULD—THERE! CONTROLS LOCKED! WE'RE DOWN! WE'RE HERE!

Story: Bruce Jones  Art: Jim Sullivan  Colors: Steve Oliff

YOU KNOW, TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I REALLY WASN'T SURE IT WAS *POSSIBLE!* THINK OF IT, AL, OVER A *MILLION* YEARS IN THE PAST! THE MIND BOGGLES!

MY MIND WILL BOGGLE A LOT *MORE*, LARRY, WHEN MY PICTURE'S ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES!*

...I CAN SEE THE LOOK ON CHATWORTH'S FACE. *NOW! HA!* I'VE LOOKED LIKE A MONKEY FOR THE LAST TIME!

WHAT'S WITH THE ROUTINE BETWEEN YOU AND B.F. CHATWORTH?

*CONCEITED BLOODY BASTARD!* EVERY TIME I TURN AROUND HE'S MADE THE HEADLINES AGAIN!

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS— HIS *FIRST* BIG SCOOP...

The New York Times

—NEW YORK, FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 1962—

ge Takes
ol of Trust
Monopoly

CREW

CHATWORTH FINDS LOCH NESS MONSTER

English Explorer Unlocks Ancient Myth

By MALDU SMERNA

YES, I REMEMBER, HE...

AL! LOOK!

PTERANODON!

NO, *WAIT*— IT'S TOO *BIG*! WE'D NEVER GET IT INTO THE CAPSULE!

WHATEVER YOU SAY, LARRY.

WHAT WE NEED IS A SMALL SAUROPOD, SOMETHING MANAGEABLE... AN ORNITHOLESTES, MAYBE...

YOU'RE THE EXPERT ON FAUNA— I JUST HEFT THE RIFLES AND SCREW IN THE BOLTS!

YOU DID A LOT MORE THAN JUST SCREW IN THE BOLTS, AL. WE BUILT THE TIME CAPSULE *TOGETHER*!

YEAH, AND IT'S *US* THAT GET THE CREDIT THIS TIME, NOT THAT CREEP CHATWORTH! HE'LL NOT MAKE A MONKEY OUT OF ME AGAIN!

YOU REALLY *HATE* THE GUY, DON'T YOU?

AND FOR GOOD REASON— LOOK AT THIS...

—NEW YORK, SUNDAY, APRIL 15, 1951—
Chatworth Discovers 'Extinct' Dodo
Noted English Explorer Finds Exotic Bird On Remote Island

YOU CAN'T BEGRUDGE A MAN FOR BEING A GOOD EXPLORER, AL...

*HA!* YOU KNOW WHO FINANCED ALL THOSE EXOTIC TRIPS? HIS RICH AUNTIE! SURE I COULD MAKE HISTORY TOO IF I HAD LIMITLESS FUNDS!

SMUG LITTLE WIMP. I'D LIKE TO—

HEY— WHAT'S WITH ALL THE BLACK HAIR ON YOUR ARM?...

HUH...?

WHAT TH--

I'M GROWIN' OUTTA THIS SHIRT ALL OF A SUDDEN!

RIPP

WHA-WHAT *IS* THIS? MY FINGERS ARE ALL *STUBBY-LOOKING* TOO!

CRIPES, YOU'RE BEGINNING TO LOOK LIKE A...A...

YES, *YOU TOO! AL!* WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! *NOW!*

THE TIME TRAVEL—I-IT MUST HAVE ALTERED OUR *CELLULAR MAKE-UP* SOMEHOW...WE'RE REVERTING TO THE *PRIMITIVE!*

BUT THAT'S *IMPOSSIBLE!* THERE *WEREN'T* ANY CAVEMEN IN THE CRETACEOUS AGE!

THAT'S WHAT WE'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED, BUT—

*LARRY! LOOK OUT!*

*FANTASTIC!* I'VE GOT TO GET A *PICTURE!*

LARRY, YOU *IDIOT!* HE'S *CHARGING!*

LARRY—! DAMN! BULLETS DON'T HAVE ANY EFFECT!

AAGGHWH!

GUN'S EMPTY! HE'S COMING FOR ME!

AGH! TRIPPED! THIS IS IT!

TYRANNOSAUR!

G-GOTTA G-GET TO THE TIME CAPSULE...

...WH-WHICH WAY? ...C-CAN'T THINK... MIND REVERTING TO THE PRIMITIVE... MUST THINK...

...A-AT LAST...

...F-FINGERS *BIG, CLUMSY* ...CAN HARDLY WORK *CONTROLS*...

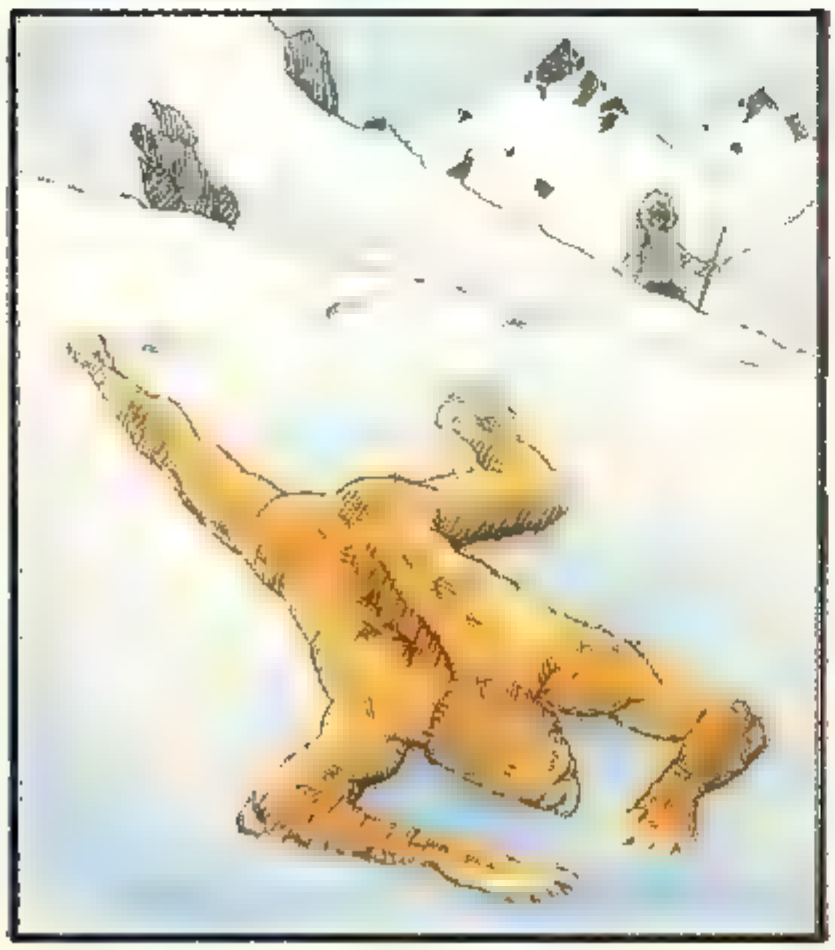
*MUST*... GET BACK ...W-WARN *OTHERS*..

...WH-WHAT...WHAT'S THIS? *SNOW!* B-BUT I LEFT IN THE MIDDLE OF SUMMER...IN *CALIFORNIA!*... DOESN'T MAKE *SENSE*...

...THOSE *MOUNTAINS*... TH-THIS ISN'T CALIFORNIA! *OH GOD*..

...*EARTH*... *EARTH ROTATING* DURING *JOURNEY* ...OTHER SIDE OF *WORLD!*..

...C-CAN'T *THINK* CAN'T *TALK* ANYMORE... BECOMING... COMPLETE... PRIMITIVE...



...e New York Times

Weather Mostly cloudy ...

—NEW YORK, SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 1954— ONE ...

...oceed ...r Voters

...Democrat, ...d that his plan ...ffect Monday at ... and would guarantee ...

...said they would ...he highest court in ... of Appeals ...

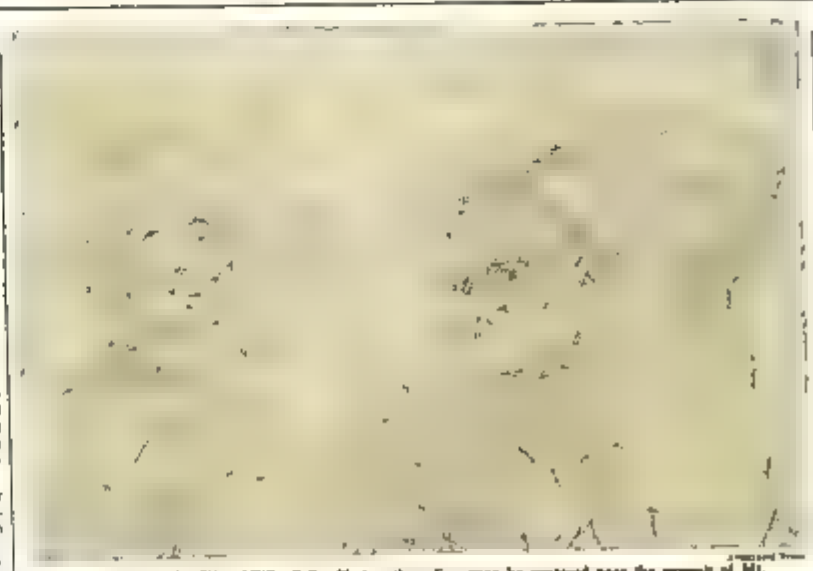
...ed, but not par... ...er said in a state... ...e appellate ruling ... ...ull-season ahead ... ..., the Director of ... who was named to ... ...n program designed ... laws that employment ... ...the administration ... ...crats over Republi...

...political advice ... ...Dulles said. "It seems ... ...his so be totally co...

...the Appellate Divi... ...ame Court in Albany ...by the state Republi... ...ge L. Clark for an ... ...the plan. The court ... ...d failed to show fr... ...aud vouch if the plan ...

...ant to test the plan ...ernment, the authori... ...he certification by ...ernments to insure ... ...have the proper ...perience ...

...men are out for the ...n't know or follow the ...



BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE: B.F. Chatworth jubilantly points to the bearpaw Abominable Snowman he captured near the summit of Mt. Kanchenjunga in the Himalayas range.

## CHATWORTH CAPTURES ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN

### Indomitable English Explorer Finds Yeti

By RITA CARSON

KATMANDU, Aug. 10 Bainbridge whose past discoveries include the ... is not dangerous, but cautioned ...

## *Mexico Re... Accord to ... Debt Pay*

By RICHARD J. ...

MEXICO CITY, Aug. ... resigned today that ... agreement with its ... group to stretch out ... much of its $80 billion ... over 14 years at lower ...

The agreement, ... Mexican Finance Minister ... Harrop, would constitute ... first restructuring of ... more than six granted to ... Latin debtor country ...

At a news conference ... Harrop said that the ... "in no way a panacea," ... relief, a breather and ... step in the right direction ... hoped it would give ... Latin-American debtor ... negotiations with foreig...

**Some Difficulties**

The agreement, which ... with Mexico's bank ad... New York, runs into ... almost 600 banks around ... are holding loans to Mex... to convince the banks ... works. Mr. Silva Herz ... knowledged there may ... particularly with bank ... loans were due in the ... next year ...

[In New York, banks ... though much progress ... made, the negotiations ...

Continued Page ...

SCHOOL IS OUT ON THE PLANET SEPHALPOD AND SOME PARENTS ARE RUNNING SHORT OF PATIENCE...

FIZBIN! SNOOT! ZINGER! PAY ATTENTION!

I WILL BE GONE FOR FIVE SHILS. DAZZ THE FLIEDERVOOM WHILE I'M GONE!

YES, DADDY.

STORY, CHARLES WAGNER

PENCILS, DAN DAY

INKS, TOM YEATES

LETTERS, TIM HARKINS

COLOR, RON COURTNEY

SNOOT! ZINGER! LET'S GO FOR ZOOM!

NO! DAD'LL GET MAD.

FINISH FIRST.

IN A WINK, FIZBIN HAD THE HATCH OPEN.

FINISH LATER. ZOOM NOW.

WELL...

WITHIN MINUTES...

WEEEEE!

C'MON FIZBIN. LET'S GO GUMFING.

OKEE--DOKEE.

OOOO! NEATO! JAZZZ-DAZZZ!

AFTER A BIT, THE GAME GOT OLD

THIS IS HUM-DUM.

GOOD IDEA.

YEAH! LET'S VIP TO KADOOM.

AND SO OFF THEY WENT...

BETTER! BETTER!

VWEEEE! OOOOO!

AGAIN, EVEN THIS NEW SPORT BECAME DULL.

HUM-DUM! HUM-DUM!

OKAY! OKAY!

YAWN: AHH-UMM.

I KNOW A PLACE WE CAN GUMF

AND SO THEY CAME TO A NEW PLANET...

EVER GUMF HERE BEFORE?

NAN-- BUT IT LOOKS LIKE FUN.

BETTER ZOOM, OUR FIVE SHILS ARE ALMOST UP!

THEN LET'S GO!

VWEEEEEEE!

NEATO!

... AND THEY HAD FUN!

LOTS OF FUN!

FINALLY IT WAS TIME TO GO.

GOTTA ZOOM! OUR SHILS ARE ALMOST UP!

HEY, FIZ! WHAT THAT?

DAD'S GONNA GUMF US FOR SURE!

HE WON'T SEE!

I HOPE NOT.

ARE YOU BOYS FINISHED?

YES, DA-DEE.

I'M PROUD OF YOU.

JUST WALK AWAY SLOW...

HEY HOW'D THIS DENT GET ON THE FENDER!

UH-OH...

AND SO YOU SEE, SEPHALPOD IS LIKE ANY OTHER PLANET-- YOU HAVE TO TEACH KIDS RESPECT FOR OTHER PEOPLES' PROPERTY-- PROVIDED OF COURSE YOUR PLANET HASN'T ALREADY BEEM GUMFED BY SOMEONE ELSE'S KIDS!

THE END

SUMMER ALWAYS COMES EARLY TO ATLANTA...A COURTESY MOTHER NATURE EXTENDS TO THE CAPITAL OF THE OLD SOUTH...EVEN TODAY, WITH MAJOR FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIES REPLACING KING COTTON, THE FIRST DAY OF SUMMER IS SPECIAL...

STORY BUZZ DIXON • ART - ATTILIO MICHELUZZI • COLORS: RON COURTNEY • LETTERING: WAYNE TRUMAN •

# 'IT'S A WONDERFUL DAY IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD'

BANG! RRROARRR BANG

ATTILIO MICHELUZZI 1985

CARR'S HOUSE

FOR GODS SAKE, FENTON! DO SOMETHING!

FENTON'S HOUSE

POOLE'S HOUSE

CHURCH'S HOUSE

RROARRR

OH, I AM, CARR, I AM. I'M GONNA ENJOY THIS HERE FINE SUMMER DAY!

CRASH

SCREECH

*TSK*! 'NOTHER CAR WRECK. FOLKS OUGHTA TAKE LIFE EASIER!

1

ENJOY IT?!? ARE YOU NUTS!?! DON'T YOU REALIZE HOW MUCH TIME YOU'VE GOT LEFT?!?

BEE

SURE DO, CARR. THE REST O' MY LIFE!

DON'T BE A FOOL! COME WITH US... WE'LL SQUEEZE YOU IN SOMEHOW!

DADDY! DADDY! I CAN'T FIND TABBY....

GET IN THE @#!* CAR, SALLY, AND FORGET THE *%&* CAT!

NO, YOU'RE THE @#&! FOOL, CARR!

THE ONLY SAFE PLACE IS UNDERWATER!

THERE'S STILL TIME BUFFALO BUTT! IF WE HEAD NORTH....

SCREECH! WHUMP!

SCREECH! WHUMP! BLAM! BL

HMM, GUNSHOTS. SURE IS SAD HOW SOME PEOPLE JUST AIN'T ABLE TO ENJOY THIS WONDERFUL SUMMER DAY...

BUT TABBY... UGH!

SNAK!

GET IN THE CAR, YOU FILTHY LITTLE @!#*!

NOW, CARR THET AIN'T NO WAY TO TREAT A YOUNG 'UN.

@#&* YOU, FENTON! BURN IN HELL FOR ALL I CARE... YOU HAD YOUR @#*!? CHANCE!

BANG BANG

SCREECH

CRASH

SMACK

ZOOM

SQUISH!

MEOW

URK

YOU SLIME SUCKIN @#&!
YOU RUINED **BOTH** OUR CHANCES! I OUGHTA...

CLUNCH

OH MIGOD! YOU KILLED **BERNARD!**

SCREECH

KER-WHAM

NOW, AIN'T THAT A PITY... AND BESIDES, THE HIGHWAYS MUST BE PLUMB **SWOLLEN SHUT** BY NOW!

YOU 'N' ME GOT **BRAINS!** GET YOUR FAMILY AND JUMP IN OUR POOL!

I'LL LET YA SUCK ON MY AIR-HOSE!

CAIN'T DO THAT. MY WIFE AND KIDS ARE AT THE MOVIE SHOW, BUT THANKS FOR OFFERING.

GOOD LORD, MAN! DON'T YOU CARE ABOUT THEM?

'COURSE I **CARE** 'BOUT 'EM! WHAT KINDA FATHER AND HUSBAND WOULD I BE IF I **DIDN'T?**

BUT ALL THE **WORRY** IN THE WORLD AIN'T GONNA DO **THEM** OR **ME** ONE BIT OF GOOD NOW.

BAH! YOU ARE **WEAK**, FENTON! YOU CAN'T **PROTECT** YOUR FAMILY LIKE I CAN!

OH, JANICE! I'VE ALWAYS WANTED YOU! EVER SINCE THE **THIRD GRADE!**

I WANNA SUCK YOUR **LOVE GLOBES!** I WANNA NIBBLE YOUR **PASSION BUD!** I WANNA...

OH RANDY.. HONESTLY!

**HEY!...**

**NOBODY** TOUCHES MY **DAUGHTER...**

**BLAM BLAM BLAM**

URK!

...EXCEPT **ME!**

*NHAH!* THAT WAS MY LAST CHANCE TO LOSE MY **VIRGINITY!**

YARRRGH! I'VE WAITED YEARS TO DO THIS! EVERY SUNDAY AT EIGHT A.M.,--

--YOU MOWED YOUR @#$★LAWN!

NO! WAIT!

WHIP

PRRR

KA-CHA-

BANG!

WHIRR-K

WHEN I HEARD THE RADIO, I KNEW THIS WOULD BE MY LAST CHANCE!

GYNNARRGHH!

...AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US...

BANG

WHIRRG

KA-BOOM

BANG

OH, GROW UP, MILDRED!

DAMN YOU, FENTON! YOU DID NOTHING TO SAVE HIM!

YOUR HUSBAND PISSED HAMMER OFF FOR YEARS.... WHEN HAMMER HEARD THE NEWS, HE TOOK REVENGE!

SEE, WHEN FOLKS LEARNED WORLD WAR THREE HAD STARTED AND THE MISSILES WERE ON THEIR WAY....

...THEY LET THEIR TRUE NATURES COME OUT. SOME RUN, SOME HIDE, OTHERS HURRY OFF TO MEET THEIR MAKER!

BANG

AS FER ME, WELL, NO SENSE GETTIN' HET UP OVER THINGS I CAINT CONTROL!

LIKE MY PAPPY DONE TOL' ME..

KER-SPLASH

IF IT'S INEVITABLE.... LIE BACK 'N' ENJOY IT!

"UNGH!"

WH...WHAT WAS THAT?

LOOKS LIKE A DIRECT HIT!

WHY... IT'S A DUD! WE'RE SAVED!

WE'RE NOT GOIN TO DIE!

SURE YOU GOT A REASON TO CELEBRATE?

SEEMS EVEN A DUD CAN BE MIGHTY FATAL!

FFFSSSSSSSSSSSS

BEE!

NOPE, WHEN IT'S YOUR TIME TO GO, YOU GO! NOTHIN' YOU CAN DO 'BOUT IT.

ONLY A FOOL THINKS HE'S GONNA ESCAPE IN THE END.

SSH

THAT'S WHY I TAKE LIFE NICE AND EASY .....

SSH

THE OUTCOME'S THE SAME, NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO!

THE END

IT WASN'T THE SMUGGLING *ON* THE PLANETS PHYCO AND ALAZURRAH THAT GAVE ME A HEADACHE—AFTER ALL, NEITHER PLANET WAS CHARTERED, SO THE FEDERATION HAD NO JURISDICTION OVER THEM, AND THEREFORE NO CONTROL OVER THE FLOW OF CONTRABAND ON THE PLANETS THEMSELVES—BUT THE SPACE *BETWEEN* THEM WAS ANOTHER MATTER. THAT WAS MY ASSIGNED BEAT. I'M A FEDERATION SPACE RANGER. MY NAME IS PETE PETROGRADE.

C'MON, LUCKY, PULL IT OVER AND SAVE US BOTH SOME TROUBLE!

*ME*, ANYWAY...

IN THE TWO MONTHS SINCE MY TRANSFER TO THIS SECTOR, I HAD MANAGED TO SHUT DOWN MOST OF THE "JUNK JOCKEYS"— RIFF-RAFF THAT SMUGGLED DOPE AND SHODDY, HAZARDOUS GOODS BETWEEN THE TWO PLANETS. ALL EXCEPT *LUCKY*. LUCKY HAD A FAST SHIP.

YOU MUST PEDAL FASTER, PETROGRADE! *HAW HAW!*

# MOVING VIOLATION

IF I COULD JUST GET CLOSE ENOUGH, I COULD DISABLE HIM WITH A TRACTOR BEAM....!

PATROL

HO, HO... WERE I TO DRIFT FOR HALF AN HOUR, PERHAPS YOU WOULD HAVE THE SPORTING CHANCE, YES?

STORY: KEN MACKIN AND TOREN SMITH / ART: KEN MACKIN / COLORING: STEVE OLIFF / LETTERING: C. SPIEGLE

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED TRADING IN YOUR SHIP FOR AN ASTEROID, FRIEND PETROGRADE? YOU WOULD LOSE SOME HANDLING, PERHAPS, BUT SUCH A GAIN IN *SPEED!* HAW HAW!

PATROL

BYE-BYE, PETROGRADE! SEE YOU PLANETSIDE, AS USUAL! HEH! HEH!

NUTS! WE'RE OUT OF THE ASTEROID FIELD! I'LL *NEVER* CATCH HIM NOW!

LIKE MOST UNCHARTERED PLANETS, ALAZARRAH WAS WIDE OPEN- ANYONE COULD COME AND GO AS THEY PLEASED. THIS GAVE ME SOMEWHERE TO RELAX AFTER PATROL. BUT UNFORTUNATELY...

The Black Hole

OY! PETROGRADE! LET ME BUY YOU A DRINK!

...MY FAVORITE BAR WAS ALSO *LUCKY'S* FAVORITE

...AFTER ALL, AN UNDERPAID RANGER CAN'T AFFORD A *REAL* BINGE, EH?

EAT SNAILS AND DIE, LUCKY! IF I HAD JURISDICTION ON THIS PLANET, I'D CLAP YOU IN IRONS *RIGHT NOW!*

AH, BUT YOU DO NOT, SO LUCKY IS SAFE, YES? COME, MY FRIEND- JOIN THE GUILD! BUSINESS, IT IS GOOD!

YEAH, SURE- AND HELP YOU IMPORT BABY BLANKETS THAT BLOW UP THE THIRD TIME YOU USE THEM?

WHAT IS IN THE BOXES, I DO NOT KNOW...BUT THE QUESTIONS, THEY ARE FEW, AND THE CASH-IT IS MANY!

GET STUFFED.

TOO BAD, PETROGRADE...BUT I AM A GENEROUS MAN, AND I HAVE MANY CONTACTS. PERHAPS I COULD FIND YOU THE BIGGER RUBBER BAND FOR YOUR SHIP, YES? HAW HAW HAW!

LUCKY'S SNOTTY COMMENT STARTED ME THINKING AND LATER THAT DAY..

SAM'S SPEED SHOP

WARP DRIVE DEALER

TURBOSPACE

SAM, I WANT YOU TO MAKE THIS FEDERATION SPACE SLUG INTO THE FASTEST SUB-WARP SHIP IN THE SECTOR!

I DUNNO, PETE-I LIKE A CHALLENGE, Y'KNOW, BUT LUCKY'S SHIP...IT'S PRETTY FAST, HEY?

...BESIDES, HOW FAST CAN YA AFFORD TA GO?

COST IS NO OBJECT-I CAN FAST-TALK PATROL ACCOUNTING.

OH, WELL THEN...

TELL YA WHAT... I'D ONLY DO THIS FOR YOU, PETE, YOU BEIN' AN OL' BUDDY AN' ALL...BUT I C'N DROP A BLACK MARKET IXIAN BATTLECRUISER DRIVE INTA IT...IT'LL FIT O.K....THEM PATROL SHIP ENGINES ARE REAL SQUIDS, BUT TH' SYNTHETIC-METAL HULL FRAMES ARE ACE...STILL, HAFTA BEEF UP THEM JOINTS... NEED TA FARM OUT TH' ALLOY WORK...

HMM...GONNA RUN TA MEBBE TEN, TWELVE T'OUSAND CREDITS.

YEAH, BUT WILL IT BE FAST? I MEAN *REALLY* FAST?

HEY, YOU KIDDIN'? THAT MONSTER ENGINE IN THAT LI'L BITTY SHIP?

YOU'RE GONNA NEED TA BOOST YER COCKPIT G-FIELD, OR YOU'LL BE PICKIN' YER EYEBALLS OUTA TH' REAR BULKHEAD!...JUST GIMME FOURTEEN DAYS AND SHE'S YOURS.

TWO WEEKS LATER...

THERE GOES THAT SPACE SLIME NOW!

PATROL

OK, LUCKY— PULL IT OVER!

HAH! PET-RO-GRADE! DRINKS ON ME IN A HALF HOUR! HO HO!

ALL RIGHT, LAUGHING BOY— TRY AND OUTRUN *THIS!*

K-CHUK!

GYAAA!!!

SACRÉ BLEU!

HWAA!

MON DIEU! PETROGRADE, HE HAS GONE! VANISHED! *NEVER* HAVE I SEEN A SHIP SO FAST!

OOOHHHK!

WHA...! I'M NOT MOVING! AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE STARS?

PATROL

MAYBE I WENT SO FAST, I BROKE SOME KIND OF DIMENSIONAL BARRIER OR SOMETHING! HMM ...OR MAYBE...

GOOD LORD! A GNOME!

GREETINGS! YOU ARE BEING HELD IN A DETAINING FIELD— DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REACTIVATE YOUR ENGINES.

I AM A LAW OFFICER OF THE GALACTIC MASTERS. WE RARELY MAKE OUR PRESENCE KNOWN TO LOWER BEINGS, BUT YOU HAVE VIOLATED OUR VELOCITY ORDINANCES FOR THIS SECTION OF SPACE.

I AM ISSUING YOU WITH A WARNING CITATION— I WOULD SUGGEST THAT YOU READ IT CAREFULLY. I WILL NOW RETURN YOU TO NORMAL SPACE.

WARNING CITATION

GREAT. COPS ARE THE SAME EVERYWHERE.

?!

HEH, HEH, HEH...

LATER, AT "THE BLACK HOLE"...

DRINK UP, SPEEDBALL, 'CAUSE TOMORROW I'M GONNA LOCK ONTO YOUR SHIP AND NAIL YOUR HIDE, BUT *GOOD!*

TH-THAT SHIP...SHE IS *SO* FAST!

PETROGRADE... MY FRIEND... LISTEN TO REASON! THERE IS PROFIT ENOUGH FOR MANY! WHY, WITH THAT SHIP, YOU COULD... *WE* COULD...

♫♪

PETROGRADE... I BEG YOU... I *MUST* HAVE THAT SHIP! NO ONE NEED KNOW— I COULD ARRANGE A "THIEFT" —YOU COULD BE A WEALTHY MAN!

♫♪

TALK NUMBERS, LUCKY.

WELL, THIS'LL PAY OFF SAM, REIMBURSE THE RANGERS FOR THE LOSS OF THE PATROL SHIP, AND STILL LEAVE ME ENOUGH SPARE CHANGE TO SETTLE MY TAB AT "THE BLACK HOLE."

$ $

HEH, HEH, GUESS I WON'T BE NEEDING *THIS* ANYMORE...

WARNING CITATION

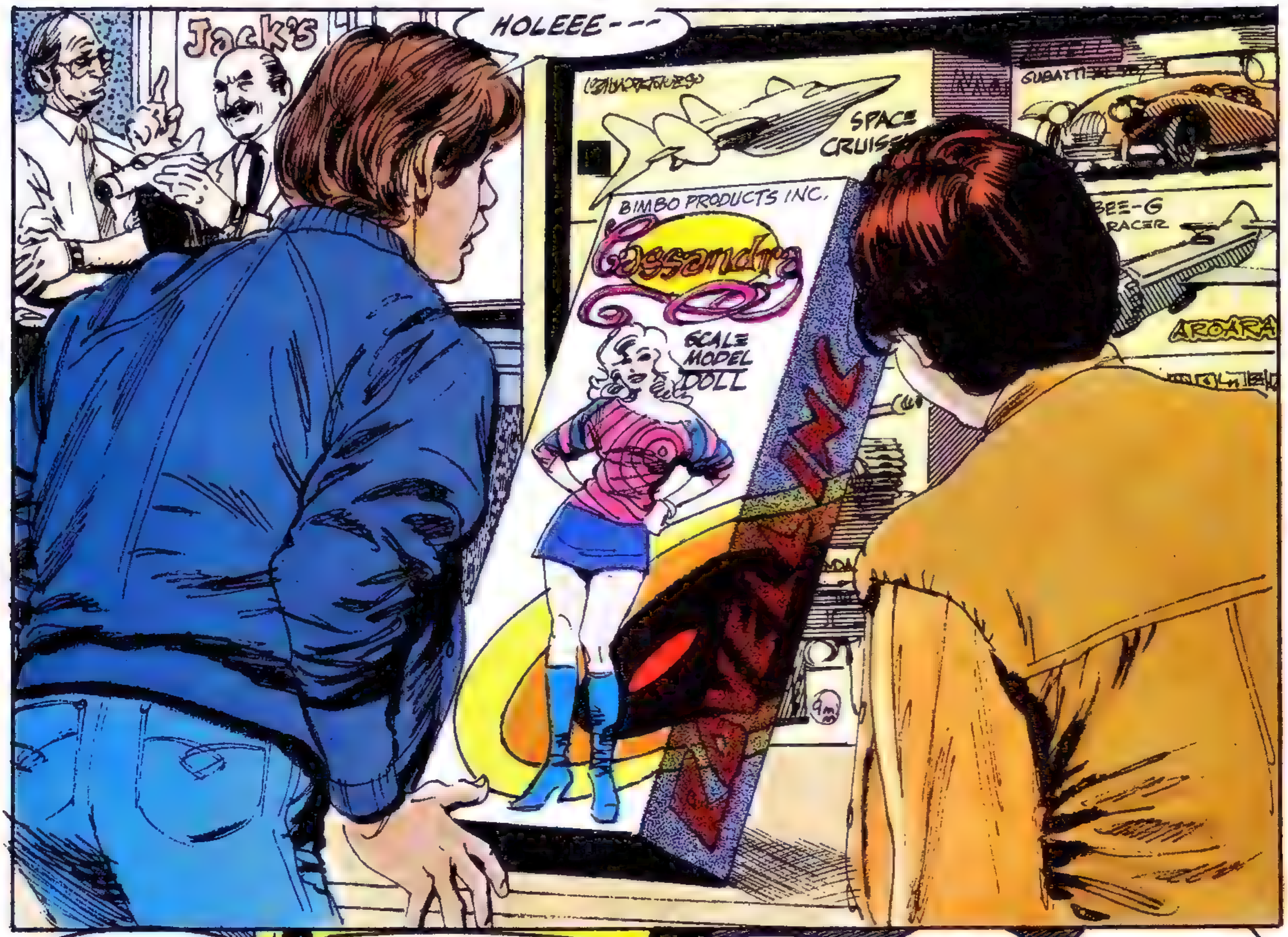
IF THIS CRAFT IS AGAIN DETECTED EXCEEDING LOCAL SPEED LIMITS, THE CRAFT AND ALL OCCUPANTS WILL BE PERMANENTLY TRANSPORTED TO AN UNPLEASANT ALTERNATE UNIVERSE AS PROVIDED FOR IN GALACTIC LAW (SEE VOXN VS. NRG, 2 14 78)

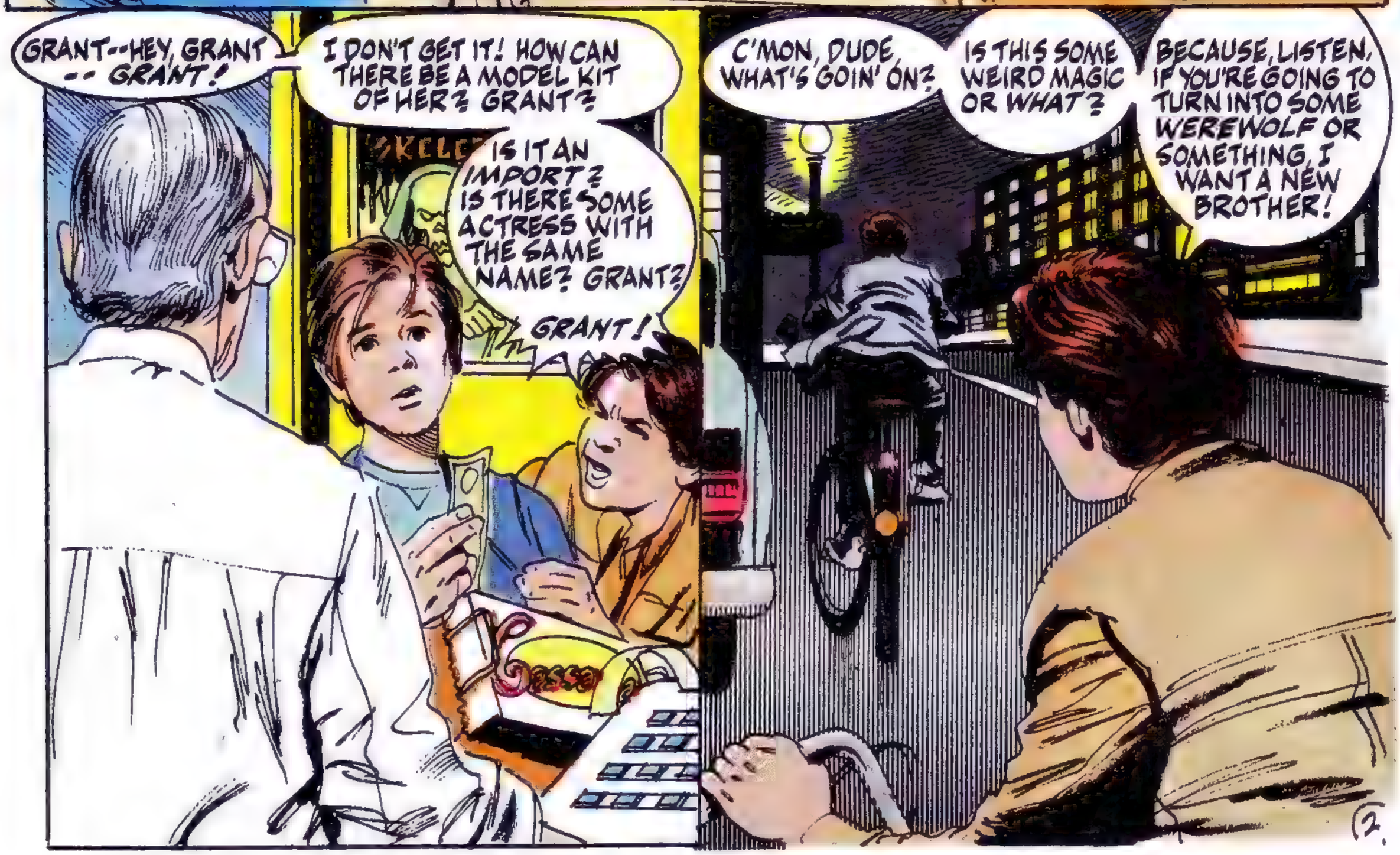
...E I.P KEEP OUR CITY CLEAN

END

# PERFECT MODEL

BEPPE SABATINI~ WRITER • GRAY MORROW~ARTIST/LETTERER • RON COURTNEY~ COLORIST





GRANT--HEY, GRANT -- GRANT!
I DON'T GET IT! HOW CAN THERE BE A MODEL KIT OF HER? GRANT?
IS IT AN IMPORT? IS THERE SOME ACTRESS WITH THE SAME NAME? GRANT?
GRANT!
C'MON, DUDE, WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
IS THIS SOME WEIRD MAGIC OR WHAT?
BECAUSE, LISTEN, IF YOU'RE GOING TO TURN INTO SOME WEREWOLF OR SOMETHING, I WANT A NEW BROTHER!

SHE MUST BE PERFECT

ONCE I SAW CASSANDRA IN A SWIMSUIT AND SHE HAD NO SCARS NO SEAMS

AND THE SUN TURNED HER SKIN CARAMEL TURNED HER HAIR LEMON CREME

(SHE MUST BE PERFECT)

PEACH GLOSSED LIPS LONG SMOOTH LIMBS LONG JADE NAILS MATCHED HER EARRINGS MATCHED HER EYES

(SHE MUST BE PERFECT)

FINISH HER AND IF SHE IS FLAWLESS, IMMACULATE PRISTINE WITHOUT BLEMISH WITHOUT FINGERPRINTS WITHOUT BRUSHSTROKE YOU WILL BE REWARDED.

AND THAT WAS THE LAST NIGHT GRANT EVER SPENT UNSULLIED.

WHEN GRANT IS 80, WHEN LIVER SPOTS CRAWL ACROSS HIS SCALP LIKE LICHEN, HE WILL HEAR AN OLD SONG OR CATCH AN OLD FAINT SCENT, AND THESE NIGHTS WILL ALL COME BACK TO HIM.

HE WOULD MAKE THIS RUSH HOME FROM SCHOOL -- THIS FEVERISH, BREATHLESS RUSH -- AND CASSANDRA WOULD BE WAITING FOR HIM.

OR SOMETHING VERY MUCH LIKE CASSANDRA.

SHE HAD THIS GYMNAST'S BODY, ALL MUSCLE TONE AND AROUSAL.

SHE WAS ALWAYS WRAPPED UP IN NEW LINGERIE, LIKE A CHRISTMAS PRESENT, AND SHE ALWAYS SMELLED FAINTLY OF STRAWBERRY SHAMPOO AND NEW FABRIC.

SHE WOULD DRAW THEIR BODIES TOGETHER, AND LIE DOWN AND HOLD HIM AGAINST HER.

AND THEY WOULD LIE LIKE THAT THEIR BODIES WARMING AND MOULDING TO EACH OTHER, MAYBE AN HOUR, UNTIL CASSIE WOULD SNAKE HER LITTLE PINK TONGUE INTO HIS LIPS, OR PROBE HER LITTLE HAND INTO HIS SHIRT. — INTO HIS TROUSERS.

AND WHEN THEY WERE BOTH READY

THEY DID IT.

SHE KNEW EVERYTHING.

THE WEEK OF ACHING EXERTION AND BLINDING EXCITEMENT AND HALLUCINATING SLEEPLESSNESS...

AND IT WILL ALL COME BACK TO HIM:

WHEN HE REMEMBERS THE GIRL WHO SMELLED LIKE STRAWBERRY SHAMPOO

AND MODEL CEMENT.

SO I ASK IF SHE'S ON THE PILL, AND SHE JUST *LAUGHS*, YOU KNOW?

JUST, "YOU'RE SAFE, HA-HA."

SHE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT *ANYTHING* REALLY, AND LAST NIGHT, DAD ALMOST *CAUGHT* US--

SO WHO CARES? JUST USE HER.

BA PI KING

SHE'S NOT "JUST A TOY," EDDIE! I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* SHE IS! I THINK SHE TOOK ONE OF MY MODELS, TOO. YOU KNOW, THE CORD ROADSTER?

OH, NO! YOUR BEST MODEL!

BUMMER! WHAT WOULD SHE *DO* WITH IT?

I DUNNO... I MEAN SHE'S JUST A TOY, Y'KNOW?

REALLY! IT TOOK ME *FOUR MONTHS* TO BUILD IT. IT WAS *GONE* THIS MORNING!

YA WANNA DRIVE? I DON'T KNOW *HOW*!

I RAN OVER A DOG, I THINK!

WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE *FUNNY*?

HI, HONEY! WANT TO GO FOR A RIDE?

MY MODEL!

VRoooooooMERK!

LISTEN, CASSIE, YOU GOTTA GO HOME! YOU CAN'T BE HERE! WHAT IF THE *REAL* CASSANDRA SHOWS UP? WHAT IF MY *FOLKS* SEE YOU?

FINE! *BE* AN OLD FART! I'M GOING DRIVING!

SEE IF THE *REAL* CASSANDRA WILL GO OUT WITH YOU!

PUT MY MODEL BACK! MAKE IT LITTLE AGAIN!

DON'T SCRATCH IT!

SKREEEEE KRUNCH!

GEEZ, CASSIE, COULD YOU STOP TAKING MY MODELS OUT?

YOU TRASH THEM COMPLETELY. THAT AIRPLANE COST ME SIXTY BUCKS!

WELL, SOMETIMES, I WONDER--I MEAN--MAYBE--WELL, IF I'M AWAY AT SCHOOL, DO YOU EVER, YOU KNOW, LIKE, *THINK* ABOUT ME?

I GUESS SO, I DON'T KNOW. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

LOOK, WE GOTTA TALK, CASSIE.

I MEAN, YOU NEVER USE MY *NAME*, YOU KNOW? YOU NEVER EVEN CALL ME GRANT OR ANYTHING.

I KNOW YOUR NAME. IT'S *GRANT*, OKAY?

WHY STALL AROUND... *GRANT*? JUST TELL ME WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU... *GRANT*. C'MON, *GRANT*! CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE, *GRANT*?!

OH, WHINE, WHINE, WHINE.

I'M SO HORNY AND ALL YOU DO IS COMPLAIN.

-- I TOOK CARE OF IT. I SHUT HIM UP. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

I'M *TRYING* TO EXPLAIN-- IT'S LIKE, WHEN I TOLD YOU HOW MY *DAD* WAS ON MY CASE? FOR HAVING YOU OVER? WELL--

LA-TE-DAH...

HOW-DYE-DO...

HUMPA-HUMPA-HUMPA!

MY *FATHER*? YOU DID IT WITH MY *FATHER*? YOU *BITCH*! HOW COULD YOU DO THAT TO ME?

YEAH... BUT HOW?

GRANT...

HONEY...

I'M NOT A PERSON...

WHAT KIND OF PERSON ARE YOU?

CASSIE, SLOW DOWN!--LISTEN, I HAVE TO TAKE MY PSATS THIS WEEKEND.--

--SO I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU COULD PLEASE, UH, GET SMALL. FOR A WHILE.

NO. I LIKE BEING BIG.

WELL, I MEAN, I'M ONLY FOURTEEN --I SHOULDN'T SEE JUST ONE PERSON.

OH, RIGHT, YOU'RE LIVING WITH ME, AND YOU WANT TO SEE OTHER GIRLS?

WE'RE NOT LIVING TOGETHER, WE JUST --LIVE TOGETHER.

FINE. YOU TAKE OUT ANGELA MANISCALCO, AND I'LL TAKE OUT ENOLA GAY.

MY ENOLA GAY? MY HIROSHIMA BOMBER?

YOU'D NUKE MY DATE?

WHY NOT? A MINE IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE.

I DO. IT DOESN'T CONCERN YOU. BUT IF YOU DO IT, I'LL NUKE YOU.

YOU'RE GETTING TO BE AN AWFULLY SNIPPY LITTLE BOY, AREN'T YOU? I DON'T LIKE YAPPY LITTLE BOYS. YOU NEED SOME FIXING UP.

OH, JUST QUIT COMPLAINING, WILL YOU?

I'M GOING TO BED.

OKAY, BUT FIRST I HAVE TO FINISH THIS BIPLANE...

WELL, MAYBE YOU SHOULD DATE OTHER PEOPLE.

LOOK, YOU DON'T OWN ME, YOU KNOW!

AS A MATTER OF FACT I OWN YOU! I PAID FOR YOU!

UH... YOU'RE NOT GOING TO... UH... MAKE ME SMALL... ARE YOU?

I DON'T CARE.

IF A STRANGER WANTED TO ENTER YOUR HOUSE,--WHAT DOOR WOULD IT USE?

IF SOMETHING UNWHOLESOME WANTED TO TEMPT YOU--WOULD IT COME AS A LOVER?

KUUH

SO, EDDIE, TAKE CARE--I WON'T WRITE, BUT I'LL BE OKAY!

WE'RE TAKING BOATS AND PLANES--MAYBE WE'LL STOP AND GET A MOON ROCKET!

I'VE DECIDED TO NEVER LET CASSIE GET BORED AGAIN!

JUST IN TIME, TOO!

BUT... BUT...

VROOOO

SPACE... THE ULTIMATE **BARRIER**... THE LAST BASTION BETWEEN **THEM** AND **US**... "US" BEING **HUMANITY**, "THEM" BEING HOSTILE **ALIENS**...

LIGHT YEARS FROM EARTH... SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE HEAVENS... ARE ARMED SPACE STATIONS, EARLY WARNING POSTS THAT NEED PERIODIC **CREW RELIEF**!

THUNK THUNK

DAMNITALL, FENSTER, LET US IN!

# WHAT A RELIEF!

HELL, NO! I AIN'T NO RUBE! YOU ALL MIGHT BE SOMA' THEM ***SPACE ALIENS*** I'S SUPPOSED TO GUARD AGAINST.

THEY'S ***SNEAKY*** BASTIDS!

FENSTER, DON'T BE A ***DOPE***! IT'S ***ME***-- PIERCE--WITH YOUR ***RELIEF CREW***!

YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THEM ALIENS ARE ***SHAPE CHANGERS***!!

SEE HERE! IF WE WERE ALIENS, HOW WOULD WE HAVE THE ***ACCESS CODES***?!

YOU MIGHTA ***CRACKED*** 'EM--OR GOT A ***TRAITOR*** TO TALK!

STORY: **Buzz Dixon** PENCILS: **Karl Waller**
INKS: **Gerald Forton** LETTERING: **Kurt Hathaway**
COLOURING: **Lovern Kindzierski**

I WAS AFRAID OF THIS -- FENSTER'S BEEN OUT HERE ALONE TOO LONG -- HE'S GONE SPACE HAPPY!

PRECISELY! THAT'S WHY A FIVE MAN CREW WAS SENT TO REPLACE HIM!

FENSTER! LET US IN AND WE'LL PROVE WE'RE NOT ALIENS!

HA! NICE TRY--

"THAT'S HOW THEY ATTACKED RIGEL IV -- DISGUISED AS MALE STRIPPERS!"

"NOT TO MENTION HOW THEY SKAGGED MOST OF THE PAPAL STAFF ON NEW VATICAN, DISGUISED AS NUNS!"

SOMETHING'S WRONG HERE-- THAT'S NOT FENSTER IN THERE!

NOT FENSTER?! DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!

FUNNY THING, PIERCE, GOOD BUDDY.-- I WAS JUST 'BOUT TO SAY THE SAME ABOUT YOU!

YOU SURE AIN'T ACTIN' LIKE THE PIERCE I KNOW!

SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE, PIERCE?

I'M CAPTAIN TACKER, FENSTER-- YOUR RELIEF!

WHAT CAN MY MEN AND I DO TO PROVE WE'RE HUMAN?

NOTHING...

SAY YOUR PRAYERS OR WHATEVER YOU SAY, VARMINTS -- 'CAUSE I'M A'GONNA COMMENCE ***ZAPPIN'*** IN JUST A FEW MOMENTS!

PIERCE W.

TACKER

IT'LL TAKE HIM A FEW SECONDS TO ***ZERO*** IN!

JUST ENOUGH TIME TO ***JAM*** HIS WEAPONS SYSTEMS--

--I HOPE!

BUT THIS WILL ONLY ***SLOW*** HIS ANTI-PERSONNEL WEAPONS -- NOT KNOCK THEM OUT ***COMPLETELY!***

DANGER

LOOKS LIKE I'M GONNA HAVE TO DRAG OUT THE ***HEAVY ARTILLERY***--

--THE ***MARK III, FLEET-BUSTER!***

GOOD LORD! DON'T ***FIRE*** THAT THING! EVEN IF YOU DON'T ***HIT*** US, THE RADIATION SPILL WILL ***KILL*** US!

aha! KNOCKED OUT MY ***SMALL CALIBER*** WEAPONS, DID YA?

KINDA ***PROVES*** MY POINT, DON'T IT?

TACKER! GET YOUR MEN UP HERE! WE GOTTA WORK QUICK IF WE WANT TO SURVIVE!

TACKER

I'M ORDERING YOU TO STOP THIS, PIERCE! WE'VE GOT TO PROVE WE'RE NOT ALIENS!

STOP HIM, MEN -- BEFORE HE ANGERS FENSTER MORE!

TACKER, YOU DAMN FOOL -- CALL OFF YOUR MEN! SOMETHING'S WRONG! FENSTER'S EITHER GONE NUTS --

OR HE'S BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE ALIENS!!

F-F-FENSTER! DON'T SHOOT! TELL US WHAT WE CAN DO TO PROVE WE'RE HUMAN!

WA-A-A-LLL, MEBBE YOU ALL ARE HUMAN - BUT PIERCE SURE AIN'T!

I WON'T SHOOT -- IF YOU KILL PIERCE!

DON'T YOU SEE WHAT HE'S TRYING TO DO, TACKER?

HE'S TRYING TO TURN US AGAINST ONE ANOTHER--

FIRST BY ELIMINATING THE ONLY MAN WHO KNOWS FENSTER--

--THEN BY TURNING YOU AGAINST EACH OTHER--ONE BY ONE!

I DON'T THINK SO, PIERCE:--

MAYBE FENSTER *ISN'T* CRAZY--MAYBE YOU *ARE* AN ALIEN!

HOW COULD *I* BE AN ALIEN, TACKER? I FLEW YOU FROM *STARBASE!*

YOU TAKE LONG, DANGEROUS *SOLO* MISSIONS, PIERCE!

TACKER

WHO KNOWS *WHEN* YOU MAY HAVE BEEN *REPLACED?*

DON'T FALL PREY TO HIS WARPED *LOGIC*, TACKER! IT'S ONLY A-- UNGH!

TRUMAN T

GOOD SHOW! YOU GOT THE *ALIEN!*

THAT'S IT, JONES--RIP HIS *ROCKET PACK* OFF SO HE CAN'T ESCAPE!

OKAY, FENSTER! SEE? WE CAUGHT HIM! WE CAUGHT THE DIRTY LITTLE ALIEN!

PIERCE

NOT MUCH OF A CHANCE-- ONLY HOPE I CAN REACH THE SHUTTLE--

WHOO--EE! YOU SHORE DID! GUESS I WAS WRONG ABOUT YOU GUYS! YOU DONE GOOD!

HANG ON WHILE I GET MUH SHOOTIN' IRON WORKIN'--

--WE'RE GONNA HAVE *ALIEN-IN-A BASKET* TONIGHT!

--BEFORE MY *AIR* RUNS OUT!

KA-ZAP!

...GOTTA... GOTTA GET... INSIDE... PASSING OUT...

...SEAL THE AIRLOCK...OPEN THE OXYGEN...

HSSS

EVADE THE FLEET-BUSTER-- AND GET BACK TO STARBASE WITH A WARNING!

WOOSH!

HE-HE GOT AWAY! BUT WE TRIED--WE REALLY DID TRY!

SHUCKS, TACKER, I REALIZE THAT-- YOU GUYS ARE HUMAN IN MY BOOK!

ONLY THREE MEN CAN USE THE AIR-LOCK AT A TIME, TACKER--SO I HOPE YOU WON'T MIND WAITING A COUPLE OF MINUTES.

NOT AT ALL--NOT AT ALL!

RIPP!

SHREV

I'M OPENING THE OUTER AIRLOCK, NOW, TACKER--I CAN'T TELL YOU ALL HOW MUCH I WAN-NA MEET YOU!

GNYARRGGHH!!

F. GORDON

GUNCH

End

# ·EYES·OF·THE·SIBYL·

STORY · NICOLA CUTI
PENCILS · RAFAEL KAYANAN
INKS · WILLIE BLYBERG
LETTERS · MINDY EISMAN
COLORS · SAM PARSONS

EVEN WHEN THE TOWER PEOPLE CAME TO *ORSIS VILLAGE*, THEY CAME TO EAT AND DRINK AND *NOT* TO MIX WITH THE PEOPLE.

AND THE PEOPLE OF SHU RESPECTED SHUMASH.

ALTHOUGH THE *TOWER*, WHICH HAD ARRIVED ON *SHU* DURING THE THIRD SEASON, HAD BEEN BROUGHT BY THE GLEAMING GOD *SHUMASH*, THE *TOWER PEOPLE* DISCOURAGED WORSHIPERS.

THE TOWER PEOPLE HAD COME WITH THE TOWER AND THEIR ANGRY EYES AND *SHOCK STAFFS* HAD MADE THEIR MESSAGE CLEAR TO THE SHUIANS.

THEY WANTED TO BE LEFT *ALONE!*

SO, DOC, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BEEN TO TOWN BEFORE. WHERE DO WE GO?

THERE'S A KIND OF TAVERN STRAIGHT AHEAD. GOOD NATIVE FOOD AND...THEY'VE GOT DANCING GIRLS FOR YOU LUGS TO GAWK AT.

AWWRIGHT, DOC! AN' LIKKER TOO, HUH?

HEY! GO SLOW. YOU'RE GONNA HIT...

LOOK OUT!

THUNK!

HO, JEEZE!

YOU GO WITH 'EM, DOC. I'M GONNA SEE WHAT I CAN DO FOR THE KID. MAYBE I CAN BUY HER ANOTHER PET.

THE DRIVER WANTED TO KEEP GOING, BUT BIG SIG WOULDN'T ALLOW IT. AND NO ONE ARGUED WITH BIG SIG.

THE THING'S A MESS INSIDE, SIG. IT'S ALREADY BRAIN DEAD. THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.

GIVE THE KID A COUPLE OF COINS AND LET'S GO, HUH?

WE CAN'T LET THIS SCREW UP THE MISSION, RIGHT? DANCING GIRLS, SIG, REMEMBER?

SIG. GOD GAVE YOU LESS BRAINS AND MORE HEART.

C'MON, *KIDDO*. I SAW A *PET SHOP* ON THE WAY IN.

THE SHOP OVERFLOWED WITH WEIRD BEASTIES BUT NONE OF THEM RESEMBLED THE LITTLE GIRL'S PET.

YOU SEEK A *BOHJOLA*, ABBI-JYM

IT WAS 'BOUT THIS BIG, SEE, AND HAD THREE RED EYES AND WAS... ALL *FURRY*, SEE, AND...

*PHRIX* HERE TO SERVE YOU, ABBI-JYM. *MISSION-ARY* EDUCATED. A GREAT FAN OF TERRANS. LONG LIVE *BASEBALL!*

YEAH, SO YOU KNOW WHERE I CAN GET ONE OF THESE... BAHJ.... WHATEVER?

NOT IN THIS. SHOP, ABBI-JYM. BOHJOLAS VERY RARE. YOU WILL FIND THEM IN THE *HILLS*.

THE *GIRL* KNOWS WHERE.

THE *HILLS*?!! I AIN'T NO SLYG-HOPPER!

THE CHILD IS A *HILL PEOPLE*. ALSO VERY RARE. THEY ARE *SIBYLS*, GREAT *SEERS*.

YOU LEAVE GIRL WITH *ME*. PHRIX MAKE DOUBLY-SURE SHE GETS *HOME*, ALL RIGHT, YOU BET.

YOU LEAVE GIRL WITH ME-- LIKE *HELL!* WEIRDO FREAK.

JUST A FEW MORE STEPS AND WE'LL BE THERE, KIDDO. TRUST YOUR UNCLE SIG.

WHOEE! DON'T THE OLD *TOWER* LOOK A SIGHT FROM UP HERE. ALL GLITTERING AND SHINEY. AWFUL GRIMY INSIDE, BELIEVE ME.

BET YOUR PEOPLE ARE A-WONDERIN' *WHY* IT'S THERE. YOU'RE BETTER OFF *NOT* KNOWING. 'CAUSE IF IT EVER DID ITS JOB...

... THAT WOULD MEAN THE *END* OF US *ALL*

PIPE DOWN, KIDDO. YOU DON'T WANT TO SCARE THEM OFF.

WE'LL JUST *SNEAK* OVER THERE 'TIL WE SEE ONE OF THEM CRITTERS POKE HIS HEAD...

*BOHJOLA!* SIG! SIG!

"...UP!"

OWW!

HEY, I DIDN'T HURT IT! THE THING'S ONLY *STUNNED.* GO OVER AND PICK IT UP. YOU'LL SEE.

BOHJOLA GRYFNAF! BMAN LETORK.

SEE, YA GOT YOUR PET, KIDDO, JUST LIKE I PROMISED.

I'LL BRING YOU HOME. THEN I'M OFF.

OKAY, I'LL TOSS IN A *MALLOWMINT FLOAT* BEFORE WE HEAD IN. WITH A BIG *ROO-BERRY* ON TOP.

WHAT'S UP, KIDDO? YA ACT LIKE YA SEEN A *GHOST.*

YOU *HEAR* SOMETHING?

MUNGURD! TAUR MITHRAS MAUT!

I GET YOUR MEANING. THERE'S SOMETHING *DANGEROUS* HEADING THIS WAY. AND YOU WANT US TO *HIDE.*

SOUNDS GOOD TO ME. YOU KNOW THIS PLANET BETTER THAN OL' UNCLE SIG DOES, AND IF YOU SAY "HIDE", THEN WE HIDE, KIDDO!

AS SIG GAZED AT THE TWIN SUNSET LAMINATING THE SKY INTO LAYERS OF MARMALADE, LEMON AND CREAM AND WATCHED THE LONG DOUBLE SHADOWS CREEP FROM THE TWISTED STONE SCULPTURES, HE FELT A PEACE IN HIS BREAST THAT HE HAD NEVER KNOWN BEFORE.

SURE IS PLEASANT OUT HERE BUT WHERE'S THIS DANGER YOU--

NAXOS MYSTRIAN!

*EBOES!* THEM'S DIRTY STINKIN' EBO TROOPS!

EBOES. ORITHYIA HERSE ASTYANAX.

NOT NOW, KIDDO.

DOC, THIS IS SIG! I'VE LOCATED AN *EBO PATROL.*

EBOES HAVE BEEN SPOTTED AT OTHER *OUTPOSTS*, SIG. WE SUSPECT IT'S A *DIVERSION TACTIC.*

IT *DOESN'T* MEAN THE *EBO INVASION FORCES* WILL EXIT *HYPER-SPACE* AT *SHU.*

JUST THE SAME, YOU'D BETTER PICK US UP, DOC.

AND SEE IF YOU CAN LOCATE A SHU BY THE NAME OF *PHRIX.* A LITTLE RAT-FACED GUY...

I THINK WE'RE GOING TO NEED A *TRANSLATOR.*

ORITHYIA HERSE *ASTYANAX!*

AT THE SHUIAN GIRL'S DWELLING AT 2134 HRS. TERRAN STANDARD TIME...

DOC, WHAT'S A *SIBYL?*

IT'S AN ANCIENT TERM FOR A SORCERESS, ACTUALLY, A *SEER* OR *FORTUNE TELLER.*

YOU *CAN'T* BE SERIOUS, SIG. ARE YOU SAYING THAT LITTLE GIRL FORESAW THE COMING *EBO INVASION?*

SHE *DID* DRAW WHAT 'PEARED TO ME TO BE A PRETTY ACCURATE OUTLINE OF AN *EBO STAR SHIP.*

WHICH SHE MIGHT EASILY HAVE *SEEN* WHEN THE EBO PATROL *LANDED* ON SHU.

MAYBE.

THE GIRL'S MOTHER CLAIMS THE GIRL *IS A SIBYL.* HER *GRANDMOTHER* PASSED THE *SIGHT* DOWN TO HER

AND WHAT DOES SHE SEE?

GREAT METAL *GODS* APPEAR IN THE SKY, SPEWING RED AND YELLOW FIRE AT *THE TOWER.*

OKAY. SHE'S GOT THE COLORS OF *LASER FIRE* RIGHT, BUT THAT'S *STILL* NOT ENOUGH DATA FOR ME TO CALL IT IN.

IF WE MOVE OUR *FLEET* TO SHU AND EBOES POP OUT OF HYPER-SPACE *ELSEWHERE* ... EARTH IS *LOST.*

SHE ALSO SAW *INSIDE* YOUR *TOWER DWELLINGS* AT THE TIME OF THE APPEARANCE. YOUR STRANGE FLASHING WINDOWS CALLED...*SCREENS*

SHE CAN GIVE YOU THE *EXACT TIME* AND THE... *COORDINATES* ON THE SCREENS.

DR. TERRY PHIPPS TO TOWER. GET ME THE WATCH COMMANDER, *AT ONCE! PRIORITY RED!*

AT CENTRAL CONTROL, WATCH TOWER BASE, 2225 HRS. *TST*...

DOC, I FED YOUR DATA TO *GALAVAC* AT *TERRA CENTRAL.* AT FIRST THEY TREATED IT WITH *ROUTINE* INTEREST ...UNTIL THE *ACCU PROBABILITY FACTOR* CAME IN.

IT WAS *EIGHTY-NINE PERCENT!* THE *HIGHEST* OF ANY REPORT!

*TC* IS SENDING IN THE ENTIRE *FLEET!*

IT SHOULD ALL BE OVER BY 2400 HOURS TOMORROW AND *GALAVAC* GIVES US A *NINETY-THREE PERCENT* CHANCE OF *TOTAL VICTORY!*

DID YA HEAR THAT, KIDDO, WE'RE ...WHA??!

WHAT HAPPENED??

A PENALTY FOR BEING A SIBYL.

ONCE SHE *REVEALS* A FUTURE AND IT IS *CHANGED*, THEN ALL THAT FOLLOWS IS ALSO CHANGED. THE FUTURE SHE ONCE OBSERVED IS *NO LONGER THERE* FOR HER TO SEE.

SIMPLY SPEAKING-- SHE IS *BLIND*.

DOC, YOU CAN *FIX* HER, HUH--GIVE HER A *NEW* SET OF *EYES*, RIGHT?

SHE'S AN *ALIEN*, SIG. HER SYSTEM *WON'T* ACCEPT OUR *TECHNOLOGY*.

I'D NEED *WEEKS* TO STUDY HER...AND ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WE'LL BE *GONE* FROM HERE IN *TWO DAYS*.

WE *CAN'T* JUST LEAVE HER--NOT AFTER WHAT SHE *SACRIFICED* FOR US!

FOR *YOU*, SIG. SHE DID IT ONLY FOR *YOU*.

YOU KNOW YOUR ORDERS. WE PICK UP THE OTHERS I LEFT AT THE TAVERN AND THEN WE TAKE OUR *STATIONS* AT THE *TOWER*. YOU *COMING*?

'BYE, DOC.

*NOT* GOOD-BYE, SIG. I'LL BE BACK...

...WITH A NEW SET OF *EYES* FOR THE *SIBYL*!

THE END

MY POP'S OKAY--A LITTLE INCOMPETENT, A LITTLE CRAZY, BUT A GOOD HEART. HE AND MY MOM ARE DIVORCED. SO I'VE STUCK WITH HIM--EVEN WHEN HE ALMOST GOT US KILLED.

SEE, IT WAS SUMMER VACATION AND WE WENT CAMPING. BUT IT REALLY STARTED BEFORE THAT--AT HIS HOUSE...

POP KEPT TELLING ME...

LAWRENCE--WHO NEEDS TELEVISION? WHO NEEDS THE CONVENIENCES OF THE MODERN KITCHEN?...

WHY, IT'S GOTTEN SO THAT MAN BARELY NEEDS TO LIFT A FINGER TO SURVIVE.

OH, GOD.

IT WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU PUKE! AND THEN HE'D SAY:

BUT IS THAT ***LIVING***? NO SIR-***REE!*** WHY, THE ***REAL*** LIFE'S OUT HERE--CLOSE TO ***NATURE!***

BROTHER!

CAMPING LIFE

BUT POP'S ALL RIGHT. THAT'S WHY I LET HIM TAKE ME TO

# The GREAT OUTDOORS

Story: Ruby
Art: Doug Medved
Lettering: Carrie Spiegle
Colors: Lovern Kindzierski

IF YOU KNEW MY POP YOU'D UNDERSTAND THIS CAMPING THING WAS SOMETHING HE HAD TO GO THROUGH--A ROMANTIC NOTION, A PHASE...

THAT'S WHY I HUMORED HIM. I MEAN, I LOVE THE GUY, SO I HAD TO GO ALONG WITH IT.

LAWRENCE, YOU'RE UP.

MORNING, POP.

GOOD MORNING!

WELL, SON, HOW DO YOU LIKE THE CAMPING LIFE?

UHH, NOT MUCH, POP.

THERE IT WAS--THE FATED QUESTION. I COULDN'T JUST TELL HIM HE WAS A SAP. I HAD TO HANDLE HIM WITH FINESSE

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? I THOUGHT YOU ***LIKED*** CAMPING?

GOLLY, POP--- IT'S THE ***MOSQUITOES!***

IS ***THAT*** ALL? YOU CAN'T LET A FEW ***BUGS*** RUIN YOUR TRIP.

BUT THEY WERE BUZZING THE TENT-- ALL NIGHT! CAN'T WE JUST GO HOME?

THAT'S WHEN MY POP LOOKED AROUND AND SAW THAT I'D PACKED UP EVERYTHING AND WAS READY TO LEAVE. THAT JUST MADE IT WORSE.

GO **HOME**? WHY? IT'S **BEAUTIFUL** HERE! THIS'S THE **GREAT OUTDOORS!**

FRESH AIR! CLOSE TO NATURE!

I KNOW, POP, BUT--

BUT YOU PACKED UP EVERYTHING TO GO!

NOW LOOK--IT TOOK US A LONG TIME TO GET HERE, AND WE'RE GOING TO STICK IT OUT.

MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, POP.

YOU'RE **DARNED** STRAIGHT I'M RIGHT! SO, LET'S GET OUT THERE AND FIX SOME BREAKFAST--ALL RIGHT, SON?

IF YOU SAY SO.

THERE, NOW-- THAT'S A BIG BOY!

BZZZT!

BZZZT!

GOOD LORD!

BIG, AREN'T THEY?!!

LET'S COLLAPSE THE TENT AND GET OUT OF HERE!!

KEVS!

HERE, POP!

WELL, THAT WAS OUR CAMPING TRIP--I INDULGE HIM. HE'S MY POP AFTER ALL...

THE END

LARRY WAS **DEAD.** AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT THE DISC FROM THE ARMY TOLD HIM. THEY SAID **COLEMAN DOBBS'** SON WAS KILLED IN ACTION. IN THE CITY OF **BAGARI** IN THE **ZETA CANCRI** STAR SYSTEM. BUT DOBBS' THOUGHTS DIDN'T DWELL ON DEATH, ONLY ON LOSS.

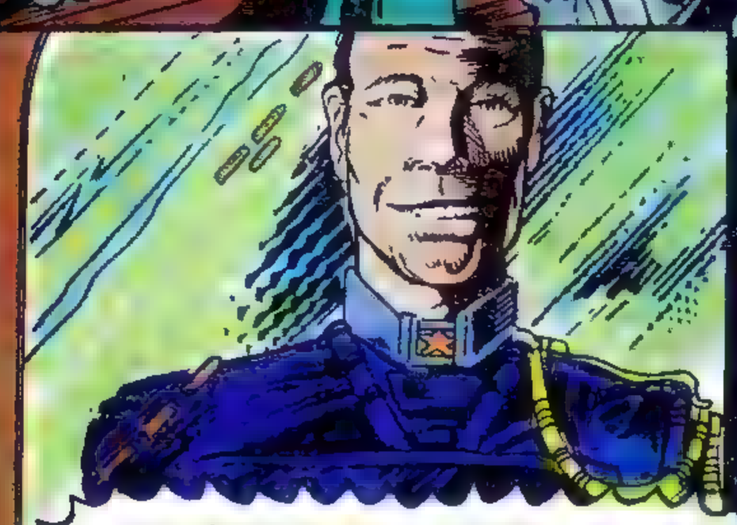
THE LOSS OF LARRY'S FRIENDLY SLAP ON THE SHOULDER. THE LOSS OF THEIR CHESS GAMES EVERY SUNDAY. THE LOSS OF PRETTY MARIE HAUSER MOONING AT LARRY WHENEVER SHE CAME OVER TO GOSSIP WITH MRS. DOBBS. THE LOSS OF THEIR FUTURE GRANDCHILDREN.

# THE FACE OF THE ENEMY!

STORY: NICOLA CUTI
ART: MARK A. NELSON
LETTERS: KURT HATHAWAY
COLOURS: RON COURTNEY

JIMMY, PLAY THE DISC *AGAIN.*

*AGAIN?* I'VE ALREADY... AW, HELL, SURE, MR. DOBBS.



YOUR SON WAS ON A SPECIAL MISSION **BEHIND** ENEMY LINES WHEN HE WAS CAPTURED AND BRUTALLY **MURDERED** BY A CANCRIAN GUERRILLA PATROL.

WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON --**LAWRENCE RICHARD DOBBS**-- LOST HIS LIFE IN ACTION AGAINST THE IMPERIALISTIC FORCES OF THE ZETA CANCRI EMPIRE.

COLEMAN, I'M SO SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, BUT I HAD TO TELL YOU WHAT A LOSS WE FEEL OVER LARRY'S DEATH.

WE STOPPED BY YOUR HOUSE AND EMMA SAID WE'D FIND YOU HERE. I HOPE I'M NOT INTRUDING ON YOUR THOUGHTS.

YOU GOTTA LOT OF NERVE COMIN' IN HERE LIKE THIS! ***YOUR*** KIND KILLED HIS ***KID***, YA LOUSY--

JIMMY, ***DON'T***! BROK'S AN OLD ***FRIEND*** OF THE FAMILY. LEAVE US ALONE. PLEASE.

Uh...SURE, MR. DOBBS. IF YOU SAY... Uh, SURE.

BRING ME A GIBSON AND A BEER FOR BROK.

I CAN ONLY STAY A SECOND, COLE. ***LIBZ*** IS WAITING IN THE CAR. SHE WOULDN'T COME IN. SHE WAS AFRAID OF ***THAT*** KIND OF REACTION.

WAIT, BROK! I DIDN'T MEAN THAT. T WAS THE LIQUOR TALKING.

SO MANY PEOPLE JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND LIKE ***YOU*** DO. I MEAN, WE WERE ***BORN*** HERE ON EARTH.

WE'RE AS ***HUMAN*** AS ANYONE.

HUMAN? HUMANS DON'T SLAUGHTER A HELPLESS ENEMY SOLDIER LIKE ***YOUR*** PEOPLE--

BROK... I'M SORRY...

FORGET THE GIBSON, JIMMY. IT'S TIME FOR ME TO GO **HOME.**

DON'T FORGET YOUR **DISC,** MR. DOBBS.

DOBBS STUMBLED THROUGH THE FAMILIAR STREETS OF HIS NEIGHBORHOOD AND STARED AT THE YOUNG MEN PASSING BY. HE WANTED ONE OF THEM TO SLAP HIM ON THE SHOULDER AND TELL HIM THAT HE WAS LARRY...

...AND THAT HIS DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT HAD BEEN A TERRIBLE **MISTAKE.**

WHEN ONE OF LARRY'S FRIENDS WAVED TO HIM, HIS HEART RACED WILDLY AS IF HIS SICK GAME HAD SUDDENLY COME TRUE.

BY THE TIME HE REACHED **HOME** HE PROMISED HIMSELF **NEVER** TO PLAY THAT GAME AGAIN.

COLE, HONEY? IS THAT YOU? COLE?

'S ME HONEY.

COME HERE, **QUICK!**

I GOT A **CALL** FROM THE STARPORT AT BEACON CITY. IT WAS FROM **LARRY!**

HE'S COMIN' **HOME**-- TONIGHT!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, EM? LARRY'S **DEAD!**

THE ARMY MADE A **MISTAKE!** ANOTHER BOY WAS KILLED AND THEY **THOUGHT** IT WAS HIM!

OH, EM! THANK GOD!

HOW DID HE **LOOK?** IS HE ALL RIGHT? HE WASN'T **WOUNDED,** OR ANYTHING?

THE CAMERA AT THE STARPORT WASN'T WORKING PROPERLY. ALL I SAW WAS A **SNOWY PICTURE.** NOT EVEN AN OUTLINE.

BUT HIS **VOICE** SOUNDED **FINE!**

THOSE CAMERAS **NEVER** WORK!

EMMA HAD THE LARGEST, LEANEST ROAST EXPRESSED TO HER FROM THE BUTCHER AND SHE MICROWAVED IT TO JUICY PERFECTION WHILE HER HUSBAND SHOWERED.

I'LL BET HE HASN'T HAD ONE OF ***THESE*** SINCE HE LEFT FOR ZETA CANCRI. AT LEAST, NOT THE WAY I MAKE THEM... ***ULTRA DRY.***

NOW, COLE, DON'T YOU DARE GO GET HIM ***DRUNK.***

WE HAVE A LOT OF TALKING TO DO.

DING DONG

IT'S ***HIM.!*** HE'S ***HERE.!*** I WAS HOPING ***MARIE*** WOULD BE HERE TOO.

LET ***ME*** GET IT, EM. I'M A BIT CALMER THAN YOU.

NOW, EXPECT SOME ***CHANGE*** IN THE BOY. WAR DOES THAT TO PEOPLE. HE WON'T BE THE SAME AS WHEN HE LEFT.

HELLO, SOOO-- ***WHAT THE DEVIL?***

***WHO*** THE HELL ARE ***YOU?!***

IT'S ***ME***, DAD. ***LARRY.***

I KNOW WHAT A ***SHOCK*** THIS IS, BUT BEFORE YOU ***SAY*** OR ***DO*** ANYTHING, GIVE ME THE ***CHANCE*** TO COME IN AND ***EXPLAIN.***

I ***DON'T*** KNOW WHAT YOUR GAME IS, BOY, BUT NO SWAMP-MUCKING ***ZET*** IS GOING TO SET FOOT IN ***MY*** HOUSE!

COLE, ***PLEASE!*** I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS EITHER, BUT FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, LET HIM SAY WHAT HE CAME TO SAY.

ALL RIGHT... IF EMMA SAYS SO... YOU CAN COME IN.

WON'T YOU SIT DOWN?

THANKS, *MOM.*

PLEASE DON'T CALL ME "MOM"! YOU'RE NOT... YOU *CAN'T* BE LARRY! I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHO YOU *ARE* AND WHY YOU'RE *HERE.*

WELL, DAD TOLD ME *NOT* TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE ARMY, SO I'VE NO ONE TO BLAME BUT MYSELF, MO--uh, MA'M.

BUT... WELL JUST HEAR ME OUT, OKAY?

YOU SEE, THIS *SKIN* IS *ARTIFICIAL.* IT'S A KIND OF BIONIC PLASTIC... VERY LIFE-LIKE. THE ARMY DID THIS TO ME SO I COULD *SPY* ON THE CANCRIS AND LEARN ABOUT A NEW STRATEGY THEY WERE PLANNING TO SPRING ON US.

YOU *DO* BELIEVE ME, DON'T YOU?

SO WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE IT *OFF* BEFORE YOU CAME HOME? HALLOW-E'EN ISN'T FOR TWO MORE MONTHS.

I'VE TRIED, I REALLY HAVE... BUT I *CAN'T.*

"I LIVED WITH THE CANCRIS FOR OVER A YEAR--SLEEPING IN THEIR HUTS, EATING THEIR FOOD, WADING THROUGH THOSE MURKY STREAMS, AND SPYING ON THEM."

"MAYBE IT WAS THE RELENTLESS HEAT OR THE BACTERIA OR THE FOOD, BUT **WHATEVER** IT WAS, IT CAUSED THIS BIO-SKIN TO --"

"--**FUSE** WITH MY OWN SKIN."

AND ALL THE UNITED EARTH'S **TECHNOLOGY** AND ALL THE UNITED EARTH'S MEN, COULDN'T TAKE LARRY **APART** AGAIN.

THE ROAST IS **READY**. WE CAN TALK SOME MORE AT THE DINNER TABLE. I MADE IT JUST FOR YOU ... LARRY.

SAY, I HOPE YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE THIS WELL, BUT SINCE LIVING IN THE SWAMP I CAN'T **EAT** ORDINARY EARTH FOOD ANYMORE.

OH, **NO!**

:OOF:

I'LL TAKE MY FOOD AND EAT IT IN THE DEN. ALONE.

YOU SEE, I HAVE TO SPRINKLE THIS ... **STUFF** ON IT OR I WON'T BE ABLE TO **DIGEST** IT.

"STUFF"? WHAT **IS** IT?

FORGIVE ME. YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO SEE MY *MEAL WORMS.*

Oh... Oh... *OH!*

YOU'VE HAD A *LONG* TRIP, SON, AND QUITE A FEW EMOTIONALLY DRAINING TRIALS. WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A *NAP?* YOU'LL FEEL BETTER AFTERWARDS. AND I'LL TALK TO YOUR... MOTHER, GET HER CALMED DOWN.

WE'LL *EAT* LATER!

SOUNDS LIKE A *GOOD* IDEA... DAD.

Oh!

Uh, NOT IN THE *BEDROOM*, SON. TAKE YOUR NAP IN THE *DEN.*

WE DON'T ALLOW ANYONE IN *LARRY'S ROOM.*

BUT THAT'S *MY* ROOM. I'M-- NEVER MIND.

G'NIGHT, *SIR.*

DOBBS WASN'T THINKING ONLY OF HIMSELF. IF IT WAS JUST *HIM*, WHY HE AND LARRY COULD GO OFF TO THAT *ISLAND* THE TWO OF THEM HAD TALKED ABOUT BUYING TOGETHER. AND THEY COULD FISH AND HUNT UNTIL THEY DIED... OR THE CREEKS RAN DRY.

BUT DOBBS HAD TO CONSIDER EMMA. SHE'D BEEN ABLE TO PUT ON A GOOD FRONT... FOR A WHILE. BUT AT THE SUPERMARKET OR AT HER TUESDAY TEAS SOMEONE WOULD DROP A CATTY REMARK. THEN SHE WOULD SHRIVEL UP INSIDE UNTIL HER GREAT HEART WOULD BREAK. THAT WOULDN'T BE RIGHT. EMMA DESERVED BETTER.

AND THERE WAS SENSITIVE LITTLE MARIE. OUT OF A MISGUIDED FEELING OF LOYALTY SHE MIGHT AGREE TO GO THROUGH WITH THEIR *WEDDING* PLANS. NO, HE COULN'T ALLOW IT.

HEY! WHERE'S EVERYBODY?

DON'T TELL ME NOBODY'S HERE TO GREET THE RETURNING *TROOPS!*

*LARRY?*

*LARRY!!*

THERE YOU ARE!

WHY DO YOU LOOK *SURPRISED*, DAD? DIDN'T MOM TELL YOU ABOUT MY *CALL* FROM THE STARPORT?

***WHO?*** WHO IS HE? WHAT IS HAPPENING?

OH, JEEZ! I WAS HOPING I'D GET HOME ***BEFORE*** HE COULD ARRIVE. THERE WAS NO WAY TO STOP HIM ONCE THE GOVERNMENT LIFTED THE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS.

YOU SEE, THE ***WAR*** ON ZETA CANCRI IS OVER.

THERE'S AN OLD CANCRI CUSTOM WHERE AFTER A WAR HAS ENDED THE TWO TRIBES ***EXCHANGE*** SURVIVING WARRIORS TO MAKE UP FOR THE OTHER TRIBE'S ***LOSSES***.

THE FAMILY WHO LOST A SON GETS A ***REPLACEMENT*** TO EASE THEIR GRIEF, AND AT LEAST THE OTHER FAMILY KNOWS THEIR SON IS STILL ***ALIVE***.

WHEN THE REPORT OF MY ***DEATH*** CAME IN, HIS GOVERNMENT FED HIM DATA ON ME AND, AS TRIBAL LAW DICTATES, HE ***BECAME*** ME.

HE'D ***ALREADY*** TAKEN OFF BY THE TIME I CAME OUT OF THE JUNGLE.

WHY WE EVER WENT TO WAR WITH SUCH ***COMPASSIONATE*** PEOPLE I'LL NEVER FIGURE...

***UMMM.*** IS THAT MOM'S ***ROAST*** I SMELL?

YOU JUST SAVE SOME FOR THAT YOUNG CANCRI IN THE DEN. I HAVE A FEELING HE'S GOING TO BE ***HUNGRY*** WHEN HE WAKES UP.

AND HE'S EARNED HIMSELF A THICK SLICE OF THE ROAST...SMOTHERED IN ***MEAL WORMS***.

END

STORY: RUBY • ART: DOUG MEDVED • LETTERING: CARRIE SPIEGLE • COLORING: LOVERN KINDZIERSKI

# THE IDEAL SOLUTION!

WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO CLEAN UP AROUND HERE? THIS PLACE'S A DUMP!

PLEASE, MYRNA-- I'M TRYING TO WORK.

MEDVED

YOU CALL *THAT* WORK?! HOW MUCH *MONEY* DOES IT MAKE? IT'S BEEN *WEEKS* SINCE I'VE BOUGHT ANY CLOTHES!

YOU SEND ME OUT TO GET A PEN FOR YOU...

...WHILE YOU SIT HUNCHED OVER THAT BOARD DRAWING PICTURES ALL DAY LONG! YOU LIVE IN A *FANTASY WORLD*!!!

WEIRD FANTASY

ALIEN ERROR

MMMMM

HONEY-KITTEN, JUST GIVE ME THAT PEN AND LET ME FINISH THIS STORY. I'VE GOT A DEADLINE AND THE PUBLISHER'S A REAL BEAR.

OH, NO, I WON'T LET YOU FINISH IT, MISTER! I WALK ALL THE WAY TO THE ART STORE, I SPEND *MY* MONEY TO BUY YOU A PEN...

...AND YOU CAN'T EVEN *THANK* ME?!

YOU MISERABLE SLOB! YOUR HAIR'S NOT CUT, YOU DRINK TOO MUCH -- AND YOU'RE *RUDE!*

WELL, HERE'S YOUR STUPID *PEN!*

SMACKK!

THAT *DOES* IT! *GET OUT!*

SLAM!

JUST *STAY* OUT OF HERE!

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? MY LIFE'S FALLING APART...

POOR RANDALL -- HIS LIFE *IS* FALLING APART, ISN'T IT? BUT SOMETIMES FROM THE DEEPEST PITS OF DESPAIR MAY COME AN UNEXPECTED SOLUTION...

WHAT'S THIS?

ACME MAGIC PEN...

INSTRUCTIONS for your ACME MAGIK PEN®

"JUST DRAW WHAT YOU NEED...!"

"MAGIK PEN"? WHAT THE HELL IS *THAT*?! I TOLD HER TO GET A STAEDTLER MARSMATIC 700! CAN'T SHE DO *ANYTHING* RIGHT?

DRAW WHAT YOU *NEED*? I KNOW WHAT I NEED...

HUH? WHAT THE--

GOOD LORD!

HI, HONEY-- I'M SABINA.

B-BUT HOW'D YOU *GET* HERE?

THE *MAGIC PEN*, SILLY.

YOU MEAN...*THAT* THING *WORKS*?

OF *COURSE* IT WORKS--WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

LISTEN--I NEED SOMEONE TO KEEP MY GIRLFRIEND COMPANY SO I CAN MEET MY DEADLINE. CAN YOU DO THAT?

THAT'S *EASY*.

HER NAME'S MYRNA. GET TO BE FRIENDS.

YOU'LL HIT IT OFF RIGHT AWAY.

WHAT ABOUT CLOTHES?

TAKE THIS.

LATER ON, I'LL THINK OF ANOTHER ASSIGNMENT FOR HER.

RIGHT NOW, LET'S GET THESE PAGES DONE...

RANDALL SEEM TO HAVE SOLVED HIS PROBLEMS, HASN'T HE? WELL...NOT QUITE!

A FEW DAYS LATER...

WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO GET A JOB?

I DON'T HAVE *TIME* FOR THIS.

DRAWING PICTURES ALL THE TIME ISN'T FAIR TO *US*.

YOU CREEP! IS *SHE* ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR BRIGHT IDEAS?

HONEY--I JUST THOUGHT YOU NEEDED COMPANY WHILE I WORK.

BUT, RANDALL--WE CAN'T GO ON SHARING ONE BATH-ROOM IN A TWO BEDROOM APARTMENT!

AREN'T YOU GIRLS HAPPY WITH EACH OTHER?

YOU *IDIOT!* NOW THAT THERE'S TWO OF US, YOU HAVE EVEN *LESS* TIME TO SPEND WITH *ME!*

OR *ME*, RANDALL...

WE NEVER GO OUT!

FORGET IT, MYRNA-- HE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT US!

WE'RE ONLY TELLING YOU THIS BECAUSE WE LOVE YOU.

NO USE, KID. HE DOESN'T WANT A GOOD JOB WITH REGULAR PAYCHECKS. HE'D RATHER HAVE A MEDIOCRE CAREER IN ART!

GOD...

RANDALL, HONEY--GIVE IT UP. YOU'RE ONLY HURTING YOURSELF.

PLEASE?

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

THINGS HAVE GOTTEN TOO COMPLICATED.

BUT THIS TIME I'VE GOT A PLAN...

HELLO, RANDALL— I'M NICOLE.

I'M A COUNSELLOR WITH A PhD FROM YALE IN EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY. I'D BE WORKING ON MY BOOK IF YOU HADN'T INTERRUPTED ME.

NICE TO MEET YOU, NICOLE. I'VE GOT A RELATIONSHIP THAT NEEDS SOME SMOOTHING OVER. YOU'LL SEE WHAT I MEAN.

TALK IT OVER WITH THE GIRLS.

PRETTY SMART ON RANDALL'S PART, EH? WELL, NOT EXACTLY...

A SHORT TIME LATER...

RANDALL, WE FEEL THAT YOU SHOULD CHANGE. SABINA, TELL RANDALL HOW YOU FEEL.

YOU'RE *NEGLECTING* US.

YEAH--WE CAN'T HELP BUT *RESENT* YOU, YOU *SLOB!*

WHY SHOULD WE STAY HERE AND TAKE THIS?

MYRNA'S RIGHT--YOU'RE JUST NOT *GIVING* ENOUGH, RANDALL.

WE'RE GOING TO LEAVE YOU UNLESS THINGS CHANGE.

GIVE UP FANTASY, RANDALL --THAT'S THE *BOTTOM LINE.*

WE WANT YOUR DECISION.

JUST A MINUTE, GIRLS.

I THINK I'VE *FINALLY* GOT THE IDEAL SOLUTION...

HELLO. RANDALL --I'M RANDALL.

*I KNOW* WHO YOU ARE. SIT DOWN AND GET TO WORK. I WANT THESE PAGES DONE BY FOUR O'CLOCK--*SHARP!*

AFTER THAT YOU CAN START ON THESE!

WHAT EVER YOU WANT, BOSS.

ALL RIGHT, GIRLS-- I'M ALL YOURS *FROM NOW ON!*

AFTER ALL-- WHAT WAS I DOING ALL THAT WORK FOR, ANYWAY?!

THE END

# THE BUSTER CRABBE COLLECTOR

LESTER LOUD WAS LIKE A HUMAN CASH REGISTER. WHEN HE TALKED ABOUT HIS COLLECTION OF TWENTIETH CENTURY MEMORABILIA, IT WAS EASY TO IMAGINE HIS MIND BEEPING AS IT READ OFF THE PRICE CODES, HIS EYES FLASHING GREEN LIGHTS AS HE REGURGITATED THE OFT-QUOTED FIGURES.

FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE

THAT'S MY NEWEST FIND, JOY! IT COST ME FIVE THOUSAND CREDNOTES -- AND IT'S WORTH IT! WHEN I SELL ALL THIS SOME DAY, IT'LL BRING TEN, MAYBE FIFTEEN!

I LIKE IT, LESTER. IT'S SO HOKEY AND SO CUTE.

STORY : JACK BUTTERWORTH
ART : JOHN RIDGWAY
LETTERS : ANNIE HALFACREE
COLORS : SAM PARSONS

"HOKEY AND CUTE!" THAT, MY DEAR, IS WHY I'VE HIRED YOU AS MY TENNIS COACH AND NOT MY FINANCIAL ADVISOR! SINCE THEY STARTED BUILDING HOMES WITHOUT WINDOWS IN THE LATE 2100'S, THE PRICES ON THESE THINGS HAVE GONE THROUGH THE ROOF!

BUT AREN'T YOU WORRIED ABOUT HAVING ALL THAT MONEY INVESTED IN PAPER? AFTER ALL, A FIRE OR FLOOD --

I'VE INSURED ALL THIS "HOKEY AND CUTE" STUFF FOR THREE TIMES ITS BOOK VALUE! NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS--DISASTER OR THEFT -- I MAKE MONEY!

I'M SURE I COULD LEARN A LOT ABOUT MONEY FROM YOU, LESTER!

WELL, IF YOU WANT MY ADVICE, STAY WITH THE CLASSICAL PERIOD IN POSTERS, AND DON'T BUY ANYTHING UNLESS IT'S GUARANTEED AT LEAST THREE HUNDRED YEARS OLD--LIKE THESE!

LARRY "BUSTER" CRABBE

DON'T OVERSPECIALIZE, EITHER! A LOT OF PEOPLE COLLECT HOPALONG CASSIDY OR SUPERMAN OR SOMEBODY LIKE THAT! BUT THEY ONLY APPEARED IN ONE KIND OF MOVIE! BUSTER CRABBE--HE WAS IN EVERYTHING YOU CAN THINK OF! HE WAS TARZAN, FLASH GORDON, BILLY THE KID--THAT'S A COWBOY, YOU KNOW...

BUSTER WAS THE BEST! HE APPEALS TO PEOPLE WITH ALL KINDS OF FANTASIES! THAT'S IMPORTANT WHEN YOU'RE FIGURING THE POTENTIAL INCREASE ON YOUR INVESTMENT!

THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL, LESTER. I'M SURE A LOT OF PEOPLE WILL WANT TO HAVE THEM.

JOY, DO YOU WANT TO SEE SOMETHING REALLY... SPECIAL?

WHAT IS IT?

THIS IS MY PRIDE AND JOY! I DON'T SHOW IT TO JUST ANYBODY! IT COST ME A LOT!

WHAT IS IT, LESTER? WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE?

CAN'T YOU GUESS, JOY?

THAT'S INCREDIBLE, LESTER! HE LOOKS SO REAL!

HE'S AS REAL AS A COMPUTER CAN MAKE HIM, JOY!

A SIMULOID! I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE LIKE THIS BEFORE!

GO AHEAD! YOU CAN TOUCH HIM! IT'S PROGRAMMED INTO THE COMPUTER! HE CAN EVEN SHAKE HANDS!

IT FEELS JUST LIKE SKIN! IS IT SELF-HYPNOSIS?

OF COURSE IT ISN'T SELF-HYPNOSIS! I TOLD YOU... IT'S WRITTEN INTO THE PROGRAM! HE CAN SAY TWO HUNDRED SEPARATE SENTENCES!

WHAT I SPENT ON HIM -- WHY, MOST PEOPLE WOULD CONSIDER IT A FAIR PRICE FOR A HOME! BUT HE'S THE CENTERPIECE OF MY COLLECTION, AND HE ENHANCES THE VALUE OF EVERYTHING ELSE IN IT!

IT'S THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF SIMULOID ART, TAKEN RIGHT OUT OF A CLIP FROM AN ORIGINAL CELLULOID FILM! THIS IS WHAT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN STRIVING TO CREATE EVER SINCE THEY BEGAN WATCHING FIRST-RUN CINEMA AT HOME!

AND HE'S ALL MINE!

GOOD EVENING, BUSTER! YOU'RE LOOKING GREAT!

THANKS, PAL! SO ARE YOU!

LESTER, I REALLY THINK I SHOULD GET GOING! I'VE GOT A TENNIS LESSON TO GIVE IN THE MORNING --

JOY, DON'T GO YET! ASK BUSTER A QUESTION! HE'LL TALK TO YOU!

LOOK, LESTER, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ACTORS!

ACTOR! YOU KNOW, WHEN PEOPLE POINTED ME OUT, THEY NEVER SAID, "THERE GOES BUSTER CRABBE THE ACTOR." FOR YEARS IT WAS ALWAYS "THERE GOES BUSTER CRABBE THE SWIMMER."

A SWIMMER?!

TELL ME ABOUT YOU AND SWIMMING!

THE UNIVERSE

SWIMMING! I GREW UP IN HAWAII. I LEARNED TO SWIM WHEN I WAS FIVE YEARS OLD. I WON THE 400-METER EVENT IN THE 1932 OLYMPICS.

YOU SEE, JOY! I KNEW YOU'D LOVE IT! RIGHT, JOY?

I LOVE TO SWIM.

SO DO I! I WISH I COULD SWIM NOW, BUT I CAN'T!

HEY! WHAT'S HE SAYING? THAT'S NOT IN HIS PROGRAM!

LESTER, CAN'T WE TAKE HIM SWIMMING?

OF COURSE NOT! ARE YOU CRAZY! SIMULOIDS CAN'T GO IN THE WATER! HE'D BE DESTROYED!

WHEN I BOUGHT THIS GUY, I WAS WARNED THAT HIS PROGRAM IS SO COMPLICATED THAT STRONG HUMAN FEELINGS MIGHT SCREW IT UP! YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING TO HIM WITH THIS AFFECTION CRAP!

STOP THAT RIGHT NOW! YOU'RE WRECKING MY PROPERTY! YOU'RE CHANGING HIM!

YOU POSSESSIVE INFANT! YOU'RE JEALOUS OF A SIMULOID! YOU'RE JEALOUS BECAUSE HE LOVES SPORTS AND I LOVE SPORTS AND YOU DON'T!

WHO CARES ABOUT STUPID SPORTS? CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING TO HIM? HE'S SCOWLING! BUSTER NEVER SCOWLED BEFORE! HE ALWAYS HAD THAT DUMB SMILE ON HIS FACE!

HEY! WHO ARE YOU CALLING DUMB?

YOU CAN'T LEAVE YOUR BOX! THEY TOLD ME SO AT THE FACTORY!

HOW ABOUT THAT! I'M A MOVIE HERO! I'M DOING WHAT HEROES ARE SUPPOSED TO DO -- I'M MAKING HISTORY.

YOU KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO DO? I'M GOING TO FIND A POOL AND GO FOR A SWIM!

THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH! YOU CAN'T GO IN WATER! YOU'RE NOT EVEN SUPPOSED TO LEAVE YOUR PROJECTOR BOX! YOU'LL -- YOU'LL DE-RESOLVE YOURSELF!

IT'S BETTER THAN BEING COOPED UP IN THERE LIKE A MECHANICAL PARROT!

BY THE WAY, YOU CAN TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME!

YOU'RE FORGETTING WHO PAYS THE BILLS AROUND HERE!

I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU!

HEY! IF YOU LEAVE, HE'S GOING TO BLAME ME! I'LL PROBABLY LOSE MY JOB AT THE TENNIS CLUB!

AW, HECK. YOU'RE GOING THE WRONG WAY. WAIT UP... I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE POOL.

THEY THINK THEY CAN WALK ALL OVER ME... BUT I'LL SHOW THEM!

IF I SURPRISE HIM, MAYBE I CAN GET HIM BACK IN THE BOX! THEN I'LL GO AFTER HER WITH MY TRUST FUND! I'LL HAVE HER SO TIED UP IN LAWSUITS SHE WON'T HAVE TIME FOR A SOCIAL LIFE! NOBODY TREATS LESTER LOUD LIKE THIS AND GETS AWAY WITH IT!

THEY'RE HEADED FOR THE POOL. I'LL TAKE A SHORTCUT!

MAYBE I SHOULD SUE THE COMPANY TOO! THEY'RE WORTH A LOT OF CREDUNITS! THEY SHOULD AT LEAST REPLACE THIS DEFECTIVE MODEL FOR FREE!

THE WOMEN IN MY MEMORY CELLS NEVER DRESSED LIKE THAT!

AREN'T YOU GOING TO TAKE OFF YOUR UNIFORM?

I GUESS I CAN'T.

YOU'RE TRAPPED, AREN'T YOU? JUST LIKE ME, IN A WAY.

I'M DOING SOMETHING ABOUT THAT. BUT WHAT WILL YOU DO, JOY?

BUSTER! WILL IT -- WILL IT HURT WHEN YOU DE-RESOLVE?

IT HURTS NOW, JOY! YOU KNOW, THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I REGRET...

OKAY, BUSTER! GET BACK IN THAT PROJECTOR BOX-- OR ELSE! I'M HAVING YOU REPROGRAMMED!

TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME, YOU BASTARD!

YOU KNOW WHAT I REGRET, JOY?

I REGRET THAT I NEVER HAD THE CHANCE--

--TO RESCUE A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN FROM A BAD GUY JUST ONE LAST TIME!

THERE! THAT FELT GOOD!

IT LOOKED GOOD, TOO... BUT ARE YOU SURE THERE ISN'T ANYTHING ... ELSE YOU REGRET?

YES. THERE IS ONE OTHER THING... I CAN DE-RESOLVE OUT HERE, OR GO BACK TO THE WAY I WAS, BUT EITHER WAY, I'LL NEVER FEEL LIKE THIS AGAIN.

AND NOW IT'S TIME TO FIND FREEDOM... YOU KNOW, I'M NOT PROGRAMMED TO DO THIS. I HOPE I HIT THE WATER!

WAY TO GO, JOY!

WELL, THIS IS IT! I GUESS YOU COULD SAY I'VE BEEN LUCKY. AFTER ALL, HOW MANY COMPUTER PROGRAMS GET TO RESCUE A BEAUTIFUL GIRL AND FEEL LIKE A HERO? BUT SOMEHOW IT JUST ISN'T ENOUGH. IF I WASN'T A HERO, I'D SAY SH--

SPLA-SH!

I HOPE YOU'RE PROUD OF YOURSELF, LESTER! YOU'VE SCREWED UP A REALLY GOOD WET DREAM!

JOY, AM I DOING THIS RRRIIIGHT?

YES, BUSTER. YOU'RE DOING IT JUST RIGHT.

OH, MY GOD SHE DE-RESOLVED HIM...

STOP! YOU'RE STEALING MY BOX!

I'M MAKING MONEY FOR YOU, LESTER! YOU BROUGHT YOUR SIMULOID TO THE POOL, AND SOMEONE HIT YOU OVER THE HEAD AND STOLE IT!

WHY, IF YOU MAKE YOUR INSURANCE CLAIM TONIGHT, BY THE TIME THE FACTORY MAKES YOU A NEW BUSTER, YOU'LL HAVE THREE TIMES WHAT THIS DEFECTIVE BABY IS WORTH!

AND ME... I'LL HAVE MY HERO! WHY, IF ALL IT TAKES TO RE-RESOLVE HIM IS AFFECTION, I CAN HARDLY WAIT...

END.

THERE IS A STORY THAT HAS NEVER BEEN TOLD...

A STORY OF PERFECT SPHERES THAT DRIFTED THROUGH SPACE LIKE IDEAS THROUGH THE MIND OF A PAINTER...

THE STORY OF THE CHILDREN OF THE SPHERES, WHO BUILT A WORLD OF BEAUTY THAT PUT THEIR SHINING SUN TO SHAME--

--AND THE HIDEOUS WARS THEY FOUGHT TO KEEP THEIR WORLD THAT SPLIT THEIR STAR IN HALF.

THE STORY OF THEIR ARRIVAL ON EARTH, LIKE THE SUN SHINING THROUGH THE ICICLES--

--HOW THEY TAUGHT OUR ARTISTS NEW COLORS AND OUR WRITERS NEW WORDS AND HOW OUR FARMERS LEARNED TO FEED THE MULTITUDES.

BUS STOP
NO STANDING

PIOP!

THIS, HOWEVER, IS NOT THAT STORY.

# IN OTHER NEWS, ALIENS LANDED TODAY!

BEPPE SABATINI
WRITER
GRAHAM NOLAN
ARTIST

KURT HATHAWAY
LETTERS
MARCUS DAVID
COLOURS

NO, *THEY* DON'T WANT TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD! THEY DON'T WANT TO DO MUCH OF *ANYTHING!* THEY'RE *DULL!*

Oh, THE *ARMY* WAS HERE FOR AWHILE! *THEY* LEFT, AND THEN MOST OF THE *POLICE* LEFT!

-GREETINGS-EARTHLINGS-WE-URGE-YOU-TO-MAKE-PEACE!

*OH*, YES, *FIRST* FEW HOURS WE HAD TOURISTS THICK AS PIGEONS, *TOUR* BUSES, *MEDIA*, WHATEVER ALL! DIED OUT QUICK!

THOSE ARE UGLY GOOBERS, IS WHY! UGLY AND BORING!

-GREETINGS-EARTHLINGS-WE-URGE-YOU-TO MAKE-PEACE!

POLICE

POLICE DEPT.

--AND MOTHER AND HER NEW BABY ARE RESTING COMFORTABLY! HA, HA, HA! ONE LAST ITEM—

REAL, LIVE ALIENS FINALLY LANDED IN NEW YORK TODAY! SO FAR, THOUGH, NO REPORTED QUOTES OF, "E.T. PHONE HOME." HA, HA, HA! GOOD NIGHT NOW!

*DAD* SAID WE SHOULD *SKIP* THE MOVIE AND GO SEE THE *REAL* ALIENS!

THEY'RE SUCH A *RIP-OFF!* THEY'RE TOTALLY *BOGUS!* THEY LOOK JUST LIKE *BARF!*

NOW SHO

DAD IS SUCH A *LOSER!*

YAWN!

GATORS WIN!

WE-CALL-CONFERENCE-BECAUSE-YOU-MUST-MAKE-PEACE!

NO-ONE-LISTENS-WHEN-WE-SAY-YOU-MUST-MAKE PEACE!

WE-URGE-YOU-TO-MAKE-PEACE-PEACE!

EARTHLINGS-EARTHLINGS-MUST-MAKE-PEACE-MUST!

GREETINGS-EARTHLINGS-WE-URGE-YOU-TO-MAKE-PEACE!

THEY'RE *USELESS!* THEY'VE GIVEN US *NO* WEAPONRY INFORMATION WHATSOEVER! THEY JUST KEEP REPEATING THEMSELVES TO ANY-ONE WHO'LL LISTEN!

WE'RE ON THE VERGE OF A *WAR!* THE LAST THING I NEED TO HEAR ABOUT IS *PEACE!!*

GREETINGS-EARTHLINGS-WE-URGE-YOU-TO MAKE-PEACE!

--THEN OUR HEROES BLOW UP THE SPACESHIP, THEN THEY BLOW UP THE SPACE-FORTRESS, THEN THEY BLOW UP THE PLANET!

FORGET IT, WILKINS! NO ONE WILL PAY TO SEE SLUG WARS!

GREETINGS-EARTHLINGS-WE-URGE-YOU-TO MAKE-PEACE!

SLUG WARS

WHO BOOKED ZEZE SNAILS IN HERE? ZEY ARE DISGUSTINK! GET ZEM OUT OF HERE!

ZERE GETTINK SNAIL TRAILS OVER EFERYTHINK! GET ZEZE CHAIRS CLEANED OFF! I'M GETTINK SICK!

GREETINGS-EARTHLINGS-WE-URGE-YOU-TO MAKE-PEACE!

GREETINGS-EARTHLINGS-WE-URGE-YOU-TO MAKE-PEACE!

THEIR MUSIC IS JUST A LOT OF GARGLING! EVEN LISTERINE WOULD NOT BUY IT!

YOU SHOULD HEAR WHAT THEY LIKE! THEY KEEP ASKING FOR OLD ABBA ALBUMS!

ALSO-THANK-YOU-FOR-THE-ABBA-ALBUMS!

GREETINGS-EARTHLINGS-WE URGE-YOU-TO MAKE-PEACE!

SAMMY SLUG ON SALE

IT'S A DISASTER! THE WORST PROMOTIONAL EVENT WE'VE EVER DONE! WE HAVEN'T SOLD A SINGLE SAMMY SLUG DOLL!

WE BETTER CANCEL THAT ORDER FOR CABBAGE PATCH SLUGS!

HEY, YOU, GUYS, I GOT A LOT OF LEFT-OVER ALIEN CANDY! YOU WANT SOME FOR FREE?

SLUGGLE GUM ON SALE

BLEAUGH! NO WAY!

I HATE THAT SLUGGLE GUM!

THEIR INTERVIEW WILL BE THE DULLEST THING WE'VE EVER RUN!

GREETINGS-EARTHLINGS-WE URGE-YOU-TO MAKE-PEACE!

THEY'VE STILL GOT THE COVER SPOT UNLESS SOMETHING BIGGER COMES UP! MAYBE THAT WAR!

People weekly

Boy in Trouble

Tiny Tim's back!

Oh No, Mr Bill! Here comes SLUGGO!

CHRISTINE DeLOREAN'S NEW LINGERIE COMPANY

...VICE PRESIDENT BUSH IS *ALSO* TOO BUSY TO SEE YOU AT THIS TIME...

PERHAPS YOU COULD WAIT SOMEWHERE *ELSE*, SIRS... YOU'RE, Uh... UPSETTING THE *GARDENERS*!

GREETINGS-EARTHLINGS-WE-URGE-YOU-TO SEEK-PEACE!

YOU DON'T WANT THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE. IF YOU'RE ALIENS. YOU WANT IMMIGRATION...

WE DON'T PROCESS ANIMALS IN THIS DEPARTMENT! YOU SHOULD BE TALKING TO U.S. CUSTOMS!

YOU GENTLEMEN ARE TALKING ABOUT INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY. LET ME GIVE YOU THE ADDRESS OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT...

BOTH SIDES IN THE PEACE TALKS REFUSE TO SEE YOU-- IT'S A LOSS OF NEGOTIATING LEVERAGE TO IMPLY THAT YOU WANT PEACE!

WE-MUST-LEAVE-NOW-QUICKLY-QUICKLY! EARTHLINGS-ALL-CRAZY-SOON-DEAD!

CRAZY-CRAZY! NICE-MUSIC-THOUGH!

♪ THERE-WAS SOMETHING-IN THE-AIR-THAT-NIGHT! ♪

♪ THE STARS WERE BRIGHT! ♪

KYLE WAS HERE!

♪ FERNANDO!! ♪

END

LYRICS FROM "TAKE A CHANCE ON ME" AND "FERNANDO" © 1975, 1977, 1978 UNION SONGS AB, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN. FOR THE WORLD, INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT SECURED. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

ALL MY LIFE I'D **KNOWN** IT WOULD HAPPEN. MY DEAR, SWEET MARK HAD DIED... AND NOW I WAS **ALONE**. I WASN'T EVEN BORN WHEN MY TWO-THOUSAND SELECT ANCESTORS COLONIZED THIS PLANET THIRTY-TWO YEARS AGO NOW. OUT OF THEM AND THE FEW CHILDREN I'D GROWN UP WITH, I WAS THE ONLY HUMAN LEFT ALIVE ON **CANMANDU**.

CANMANDU. WHAT A NAME FOR A PLANET. CANMANDU HAD BECOME A LIE. MAN **COULDN'T** DO. NOT **HERE**. NOT WITHOUT CHILDREN TO CARRY ON. AFTER THE PLAGUE, EVERY PREGNANCY ON OUR WORLD ENDED IN STILLBIRTH. EVEN MINE. ALL OUR LIVES, MARK AND I NEVER SAW ANYTHING BUT DEATH. WE **TRIED** TO MAKE A LIFE ANY-WAY, BUT THE ONE HOPE WE'VE HAD WAS FUTILE.

# STILLBORN

STORY
**ERIC DINEHART**
PENCILS
**TOM LYLE**
INKS
**ROMEO TANGHAL**
LETTERS
**KURT HATHAWAY**
COLOURS
**LOVERN KINDZIERSKI**

MARK DANIEL LANDS
BELOVED HUSBAND
BORN:
JUNE 3, 11 A.L.
DIED:
AUG 15, 32 A.L.

"CANS" DESIGNED BY: B.C. BOYER

I'D DELIVERED A STILLBIRTH TWO DAYS AGO. MY PREGNANCY WAS THE ONLY REASON MARK HAD HUNG ON TO LIFE AS LONG AS HE DID. AND WITHOUT HIM-- AND MY BABY-- IT'D BE ME NEXT...

Wheee-Toot ?!

...IN A MONTH MAYBE, NO MORE THAN A YEAR, I'D GO, JUST LIKE MARK. WHAT WAS THERE FOR ME TO HANG ON TO?

GO TO FARM! I WANT TO BE ALONE. GO TO FARM!

TOOT!

THIRTY-TWO YEARS AGO, MY PARENTS AND THE OTHERS WERE LEFT HERE. THEY CAME FROM EARTH IN STASIS, IN A SLOWER-THAN-LIGHT SEEDER. THE NEXT STARSHIP WILL CIRCUIT BY CANMANDU ABOUT 60 A.L., SIXTY YEARS AFTER FIRST LANDING.

PLANETARY COLONIZATION WAS KEPT **SIMPLE**-- SIMPLE TOOLS, SIMPLE MACHINES, SIMPLE SILICONE GEL COMPUTER **BRAINS**. OUR STEAM DRIVEN ROBOTS, THE **CANS**, WERE GIVEN **SILI-PUTER** BRAINS SO THEY COULD OBEY VERBAL ORDERS ...

...AND CARRY GOODS ALONG THEIR RAPIDLY EXPANDING LINE OF MAGNETIC TRACK.

I WAS THE COLONY'S LAST BIRTH BEFORE THE **BIMP-PLAGUE** HIT TWENTY YEARS AGO. I GREW UP WATCHING BUILDINGS AND PEOPLE DETERIORATE. **NO** CURE FOUND, **NO** HOPE OF RESCUE. EVERYTHING OF OURS **DIED**...

...EXCEPT THE **CANS**, THEIR SILI-PUTER BRAINS WERE REPROGRAMMED, MAKING THEM MORE SELF-SUFFICIENT... ABLE EVEN TO **EVOLVE**. AS THEY ADAPTED THEMSELVES TO THE ENVIRONMENT, THEY BECAME CAPABLE OF INTERNAL SELF-REPLICATION.

**THEY** COULD HAVE BABIES, BUT **WE** COULDN'T.

WHAT GOOD DID ANY OF IT DO **US**?! WHAT GOOD DID IT DO **ME**... THE LAST OF **THE DEAD**!?

THE **DAMN** BIMPS.--LUDICROUS THINGS. NOTHING WE DID COULD STOP THE INFECTION THEY GAVE US. IT WASN'T THEIR FAULT, BUT I **HATED** THEM ANYWAY.

AND THE CANS! EVERYONE HAD THOUGHT OF THE CANS AS INNOCENTS! WELL, WHAT THE **HELL** DID IT MATTER TO BE **INNOCENT**? **WE** WERE INNOCENT! WE WERE **DEAD**! **I** WAS DEAD! WHY WEREN'T THE **CANS** DEAD, TOO?

Wheee-Toot!

THE CANS WERE MINDLESSLY ACTING OUT THE LIVES THAT SHOULD'VE BEEN OURS... MARK'S AND MINE. WE DIED BUT THE CANS JUST SEEMED TO KEEP MOVING ALONG THEIR MAGNETIC TRACKS IN AN OBSCENE CARICATURE OF LIFE.

THIS ISN'T **YOURS**! IT DOESN'T **BELONG** TO YOU! YOU'RE NOT **ALIVE**! **YOU** NOT **MOVE**!

IF **MARK** AND THE **CHILD** THAT SHOULD'VE BEEN **OURS** WERE DEAD, IF EVERYTHING WAS DEAD..

GO AHEAD! **MOVE FORWARD**! TRY TO **LIVE**!

THUNK!

...THEN I'D **DAMN** WELL MAKE SURE THE **CANS** WERE DEAD, TOO.

YOU CAN'T, CAN YOU?! **CANS COME**! **ASSIST**! TRY AND LIVE! **YOU'RE** DEAD, TOO!

Whee!? TOOT-Whee?!

IT WAS LIKE NOTHING I'D EVER FELT IN MY LIFE... TO FINALLY SEE SOMETHING MORE HELPLESS THAN US... DYING MACHINES INSTEAD OF DYING PEOPLE.

CANS COME! ... COME! GO! ... GO NOWHERE.!

Toot.!

Whee--

-- TOOT ?!

I WANTED TO DESTROY EVERY CAN AND CARRY THAT INTOXICATING FEELING WITH ME TO THE LAST DAY OF MY LIFE.

I RACED LIKE A MANIAC TO TOPPLE ANOTHER MACHINE INTO THE DIRT... INSTEAD I FOUND A CAN THAT HAD UNDERTAKEN THE NEXT STAGE IN SELF-SUFFIENCY, ITS CONNECTING RODS EVOLVED INTO...

WHAT ?! LEGS ?!

THE CAN WAS REPLICATING. OR AT LEAST TRYING TO. THE REPLICATE WAS STUCK IN ITS CONSTRUCTOR'S UMBILICAL.

YOU GOT A PROBLEM, DON'T YOU ?

IT WAS A PROBLEM THAT ONLY I COULD SOLVE. FOR THE MOMENT MY ANGER WAS FORGOTTEN.

COME.! IT'S ALL RIGHT. COME OUT.

HERE WAS SOMETHING-- A CAN, YES, BUT SOMETHING THAT NEEDED ME.

:SPUTTER:

I FREED THE REPLICATE, BUT THE UMBILICAL THAT PUMPED WATER FROM ITS CONSTRUCTOR WAS DAMAGED. BOTH CANS WERE LOSING WATER. NO WATER, NO **STEAM**-- THEIR FUNCTIONS WOULD TEMPORARILY SHUT DOWN. NOT SO BAD, BUT WHEN RESTARTED, THEIR SILI-PUTER PROGRAMS AND EVOLUTIONARY ADAPTATIONS WOULD BE WIPED **CLEAN**.

I LISTENED TO THE CONSTRUCTOR WHISTLING WITH ITS LAST STEAM TO OTHER CANS FOR WATER AS IT SHUT DOWN. I'D LEFT THE CANS AT THE FARM **HELPLESS**. THE REST WERE TOO **DISTANT** TO ARRIVE IN TIME.

Wheeeee...

ANOTHER CAN WAS **GONE**, AND ITS REPLICATE WAS QUICKLY GOING, TOO. JUST WHAT I'D **WANTED**.

IT WAS **EXACTLY** WHAT I'D WANTED, WASN'T IT? SOMETHING TO KEEP ME **GOING** TO THE END OF A **MEANINGLESS** LIFE?

BECAUSE LIFE ISN'T JUST STAYING ALIVE... IS IT? EVEN WHEN THERE'S NOTHING WAITING -- NOTHING BUT DEATH STARING YOU DOWN-- THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING THAT NEEDS TO BE HELPED ALONG, NURTURED SOMEHOW, SOMEWHERE...

Whee-Toot!!

...WHERE THERE'S STILL BIRTH.

END.

ALIEN
ENCOUNTERS